The Needs of Newcomer Youth and Emerging Best Practices to Meet Those Needs

The Joint Centre of Research on Immigration and Settlement_(CERIS)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this intensive study conducted by the Joint Centre of Excellence forn Research on Immigration and Settlement - Toronto (CERIS) was to focus on the needs of immigrant youth from the ages 16 to 20, as this group faces particular challenges: those common to most adolescents, those experienced by newcomers to a country, and, increasingly, those facing people seen as "visible minorities" in Canada.

Four main tools were used to assess the needs of newcomer youth: a review of the literature on the needs of newcomer youth and the services provided to meet those needs; in-depth personal interviews with fifteen key informants among management and program staff in a cross-section of the most prominent agencies providing educational, employment, mental health, social and health services to young immigrants; a telephone survey of service providers in these five sectors; and eighteen focus groups with male and female newcomer youth in the 16 to 20 year age group who reflect gender, ethnicity, cultural and racial diversity, to afford a sense of the needs, concerns and issues encountered by newcomer youth; and seven focus groups with immigrant mothers of youth.

An intensive review of the literature proved there is no real attention being paid to this age group of newcomer youth, but the literature was very helpful in identifying some of the major issues facing this age group (such as identity development, language barriers, conflicting values and gender issues). The in-depth interviews with fifteen key informants provided great insight into the need of this age group of newcomer youth. Issues linked to education and the programs provided by school systems (or a lack thereof) to meet the needs of these youths were foremost priorities for all sources of information. The telephone survey of 145 agencies providing services to newcomers contributed foundational statistical findings, perhaps best illustrating the lack of services available to newcomer youth of this age, but providing insight into the process of providing and implementing good services. The focus group study may have provided the most insightful findings of the research, as the subjects themselves were able to explain their needs and issues from a very personal perspective --again, with education being at the forefront of their concerns.

All four research methods resulted in recommendations, not only in the five main areas identified by researchers (including education, social services, employment, health and mental health), but other areas as well (including services that begin even before immigration to Canada, and, interestingly, racial and cultural sensitivity training for the media).

The results of this study strongly indicate that the needs of newcomers aged 16 to 20 are simply not being met. They seem in some kind of integration limbo: not old enough to be aided by programs for newcomer adults, not young enough for adjustment to be the gradual, family-mediated process that it can be for much younger children, nor even young enough to have the time necessary to adjust before graduating from high school. Schools are essential not only for the education of this age group of newcomers, but as a critical location for services to help their integration. It is important, however, that this group be seen not only as individuals in need of attention but also as members of groups whose differences along ethnic, gender, racial, and class lines will require sensitive outreach and specific forms of support for them and their families.

INTRODUCTION

The Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement _ Toronto (CERIS) has had, from its inception, a focus on the needs of youth who immigrate to Canada, and on the needs of the children of immigrants. Reviews of research in the field, however, consistently find very little on the problems and concerns of **"newcomer youth"**, those who are no longer properly called children, but who, as immigrant teenagers, face special challenges that compound the difficulties encountered by most adolescents. The needs of 16_ to 20_year_old newcomers, therefore, and the attempts made by various sectors of society to meet those needs, deserve particular attention.

The purpose of this study was therefore to identify the need of immigrant youth, and to survey organizations which provide educational, employment, health and services to newcomer youth in order to identify "best practices" for supporting the integration of youth from diverse cultural and racial groups into Canadian society. Information about effective programs and gaps in existing programs and service delivery infrastructure was seen as useful for strengthening programs throughout the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In particular, it could assist service providers and funders in understanding the benefits of the programs that are provided and their best practices from the perspective of the service delivery organizations, youth who use the services, and their parents. Four main tasks were designed to accomplish this:

X a review of the literature on the needs of newcomer youth and the services provided to meet those needs;

X in_depth personal interviews with fifteen key informants among management and program staff in a cross_section of the most prominent agencies providing educational, employment, mental health, social and health services to newcomer youth;

X survey questionnaires administered by telephone to staff at 150 organizations and groups serving newcomer youth;

X 18 focus groups with male and female newcomer youth in the 16_20 year age group who reflect gender, ethnicity, cultural and racial diversity, to afford a sense of the needs, concerns and issues encountered by newcomer youth; and 7 focus groups with immigrant mothers of youth; followed by in-depth interviews with selected youth and mothers who stood out as particularly insightful during the focus group interviews.

After providing a brief ***background*** for the experiences of youth, their families, and the service providers who work with them, the Report will provide the ***methodology*** of the research in greater detail, the ***findings*** of the research in those four phases (in each case according to the five sectors addressed by the research: education, health, social services, employment, and mental health), and then present its ***conclusions***. Helpful programs and a synthesized series of recommendations emerging from the research, again under each appropriate heading, are found in the Endnotes.

BACKGROUND

In 1996, 52.4 percent of all immigrants resided in the three largest metropolitan areas in Canada: Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Among those who have arrived since 1991, 74 percent reside in these three metropolises, with the largest proportion (43 percent) living in Toronto. In 1997 approximately 80,000 immigrants arrived in Toronto with the largest numbers from China, India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Iran, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, the Caribbean, Taiwan and Russia.

The spatial concentration of immigrants in Canada's urban centres has resulted in an increase in social differentiation and further fragmentation in urban Canada (Bourne, 1998) and the importance of social and settlement services which support the effective integration of these diverse newcomers into Canada. This is especially significant when we consider the cutbacks in social supports and programs by all levels of government. These cutbacks have far-reaching implications for the funding and delivery of immigrant services, particularly in the capacity of community based organizations to deliver essential services to immigrants and other disadvantaged groups (Mwarigha, 1997). It should be noted that the greater Toronto area (GTA) is now one of the most ethnoculturally diverse metropolises on the North American continent and has secured an increased proportion of the country's recent immigrants, most of whom come from non-traditional source countries in South and East Asia and the Caribbean. Also of key importance to the effective delivery of settlement services is the shift of immigrant populations to the suburbs and, most recently, to the newer suburbs within the GTA areas where jobs and less

expensive housing are available. Suburbanization is important because it may, for example, affect immigrant youth's ability to use centralized services. Degrees of suburbanization vary considerably among immigrant groups: Somalis, Sri Lankans, Vietnamese, Filipinos and Iranians are the least suburbanized and those from Hong Kong and India the most likely to settle in the suburbs (Bourne, 1999).

Issues of immigration and integration are the core of Canadian public policies and have become the focus of much public concern and debate. Integration can be viewed as the extent to which immigrants become full participants in Canadian life, capable of achieving their aspirations and potential. Thus the goal of settlement policies and the agencies/organizations that have been developed is to facilitate such integration, and to avoid the development of marginalized, isolated and segregated immigrant groups within Canadian society. While, theoretically, integration can be measured in terms of a variety of economic, social and cultural indicators, the very diversity of cultural groups in the GTA may signify, at least to some newcomers, that cultural change is either unattainable, or perhaps more importantly, undesirable. Thus, the integration measures employed in examining settlement must remain culturally sensitive and responsive to the diverse needs and aspirations of immigrant groups.

Dr. Morton Weinfeld, who developed a synthesis of immigrant research in Canada, notes an absence of research focussed on the urban setting and immigrant integration in Canada (1998: 1). Usually the process of immigrant integration, especially if immigrants are adults, is only completed in the second and third generation, by children or grandchildren of the immigrants (Vanier Institute of the Family, 1998:8), when by "completion" we mean a fully representative integration into all the institutions, organizations, associations, and societies of the receiving nation. Recent immigrants, visible minorities, refugees and family class immigrants face immense integration challenges. By way of illustration, immigrant minorities often face the devaluation of their credentials comparable to those held prior to coming to Canada when seeking employment. They may also encounter other forms of systemic discrimination in the Canadian labour markets (Vanier Institute of the Family, 1998: 9).

The entry status of immigrants may also affect integration. Some may be sponsored or nominated by close relatives; some may be involuntary immigrants or refugees; while others may come as independents or be sponsored by employers and have prior contracts for employment. Thus, families who immigrate alone or immigrate from the independent class have a greater need to adapt to new situations. They may find no one can speak their native language or share their customs and rituals. In contrast, when a number of families migrate together, they bring their networks with them and may find it easier to adapt to a new way of life (Vanier Institute of the Family, 1998: 9).

ISAP, LINC and other programs provide employment, education, health and social services to newcomer youth. These newcomers appear to go through *three main stages in the settlement process* in the use of these services (Mwarigha, 1997). In the *initial* stage, newcomers require a range of services such as shelter, food, clothing, information and orientation. In the *intermediate* stage, immigrants learn more about how to gain access to a number of Canadian systems, starting with language (e.g., ESL classes), upgrading training and education, health, housing and legal systems. The *final* stage refers to long term participation by newcomers and involves diverse and much more differentiated elements. Many social services direct their attention to the first two stages of the settlement process.

Three basic *levels of services* can be singled out. They include (1) the public and general mainstream community service agencies; (2) the specific ethnoracial-racial community agencies; and (3) independent professionals. The *first* of these levels includes government agencies; community based organizations which include service to immigrants in their programs, and community-based agencies formally organized for the purpose of providing services to immigrants and ethnic groups.

The *second* level of agencies includes specific ethnic community based agencies, organized for the purpose of serving immigrants. They may have a particular ethnoracial-racial identity and mandate or be formally mandated to serve immigrants and to include such services in their activities. Examples of the *third* level include immigration lawyers, therapists, physicians and nurses, providing counselling and health care services to refugees and other immigrants.

Many agencies and organizations are challenged to sustain services to immigrants in an era of dramatic cutbacks. Richmond (1996) indicates that funding to immigrants service agencies peaked in 1994 at $70 million and that cutbacks, privatization and devolution led to net program losses that were greatest for immigrants and refugees. George and Michalski (1996: 38) found that 84.9 per cent of 106 agencies surveyed were affected by funding cuts and as a result cut services and intake levels. These changes have brought pressure to bear on community-based organizations serving immigrant newcomers; there is some evidence that such organizations are employing new strategies (e.g., using volunteers more effectively) to sustain the effective delivery of services.

RESEARCH METHODS

The *first* task of the research was the completion of a *comprehensive literature review* of published and unpublished studies in Canada and the United States pertaining to the settlement and integration of newcomer youth and the provision of services that facilitate settlement and integration. It was important to the research team that, since this area is so seriously under researched, the review not be limited to the usual scholarly journals on the subject, but also include the published (or at least printed) community sources on the needs of youth and the various attempts to meet those needs by service providers. This, then, is not a typical review of the literature but a much more inclusive one, with, it is hoped, the result of a broader and deeper view of this issue than has previously been obtained.

The *second* task was the identification of a sample of 15 organizations reflective of a cross-section of agencies in the education, employment, mental health, social and health services areas providing services to newcomer youth from diverse cultural and racial backgrounds, using expert referencing and "snowball" sampling techniques (asking individuals identified by an expert reference group to identify other individuals for interviews).

Individual interviews were used with management and program staff from these agencies to identify key settlement and integration issues addressed by agencies providing services to newcomer youth. These interviews were designed and conducted in collaboration with the

Centre for Evaluation Research in Human Services at Ryerson Polytechnic University, under the supervision of their representative Dr. David Day. The results of these interviews were analyzed to highlight program themes and issues for these organizations including:

- descriptions of current educational, employment, health and social service programs in the sample
- identification of perceived needs, issues and gaps faced by these organizations in serving newcomer youth
- identification of similarities and differences in the program and intervention approaches used in each program area
- identification of services perceived to be "emergent best practices" and key indicators among these service providers
- identification of changes needed to improve service delivery outcomes
- assessment of evaluation approaches and methods used in participating programs
- identification of inter-organizational strategies and partnerships used to enhance service provision

Out of this work came the development of the survey questionnaire for a broader array of service providers, the next task.

This *third* task was the interviewing of 145 service providers. The research issue envisioned by CERIS focused on the medium and longer term benefits of programs offered by Level 1 and Level 2 agencies in the Greater Toronto Area, serving youth aged 16 to 20 years, with a focus on education, employment, mental health, social and health services. Level 1 and Level 2 agencies were researched using qualitative and quantitative research techniques, to identify: issues, needs and problems that the organizations confront when serving the newcomer youth population; the programs and types of interventions that they provide; anticipated outcomes of these interventions; and partnerships and other inter-organizational strategies being used to support the immigrant youth population. The research included the identification of examples and key indicators of "emergent best practices" as well as gaps in interventions and service delivery methods. This was a sizable task, and one for which we were happy to have the services of York University's Institute for Social Research (ISR).

Based on the information gathered during the literature review and the interview of key informants, a questionnaire was developed in collaboration with ISR and administered through a telephone survey by ISR staff to 145 organizations and groups serving newcomer youth in the Greater Toronto Area. The questionnaire requested a full program description, a description of populations served, needs addressed, intervention approaches, goals, expected outcomes, key indicators of success, methods used to evaluate the programs, difficulties encountered in program delivery, and funding sources. It asked the organization to identify the programs in the community which they believe provide examples of "emergent best practices", and to describe what they thought led them to label these "best practices".

A stratified sampling method was employed to identify approximately 30 organizations from each of the health care sector (hospitals, community health programs) and education sector (schools from across the GTA in both the public and separate school systems); and approximately 90 social service organizations providing support for employment, education and health problems under LINC, ISAP and other funding streams. The Institute of Social Research employed "snowball" strategies for including service provider agencies in its sample that offered what was considered "emergent best practices". The draft questionnaire was subsequently pilot-tested and reviewed with some of the earlier key informants to ensure that it worked effectively. Based on the results of this survey we:

X   developed an analysis of services considered to be "emergent best practices", identified evaluation methods used by these programs and key indicators of the "best practices";

X   assessed the commonalities and differences in the provision of services across the GTA and program leaders views of "best practices" in the field;

X   assessed the similarities and differences both within and across the range of cultural and racial groups surveyed;

X   described the gaps that have been identified by survey participants;

X   determined whether "emergent best practices" can be generalized across different groups of newcomers or whether emergent best practices must be contextualized so that the needs of each newcomer youth group can be met.

The *fourth* task was to seek the same information on the needs of newcomer youth and the services that attempt to meet those needs from the youth themselves and from their mothers.

In our original proposal we indicated that we would hold 40 focus groups with 7 - 10 newcomer youth reflecting culturally distinct newcomer groups, half of whom had participated in integration and settlement programs and half who had not. Additionally, we would also hold 10 focus groups with parents of youth in the 16 - 20 year age group. The participants in the focus groups would be selected to reflect gender, ethnicity, culture and racial diversity and to provide views from people who have been participants in programs and those who have not participated in programs.

Prior to being awarded a contract, however, CIC had noted the similar interests of a number of applicants for such research on newcomer youth, so they were asked to divide the work among themselves in a collaborative way. CERIS was asked to coordinate this division of labour among the six service provider agencies who had also be awarded research contracts in the youth theme area. This work involved joint discussions on the development of focus group design, protocols for conducting interviews and strategies for analyzing the information collected within the focus groups. While the data collected by each participant would be owned separately, all participants could share the data that were collected. Two meetings were held to:

X   develop a focus group protocol;
X   establish common themes across all participants' research;
X   identify how information could be shared and analyzed so all could take advantage of wealth of data available;
X   develop an understanding of "best practices" and what makes them "best" for each group (or not);
X   explore the possibility of making wider comparisons (e.g., geographically, ethnically); and
X   discuss features of each proposal and design ways to ensure that all major immigrant groups were covered among the partners.

It was decided after considerable discussion that all participants shared an interest in the needs, experiences and concerns voiced by newcomer youth and that this should serve as the major themes of the focus group research conducted by the different participants in the collaborative effort. Some newcomer groups were most appropriately targeted by partners with

ties to specific communities. Partners without such ties divided the remaining major immigrant groups among themselves, according to their research interests and budget.

In this new design, CERIS identified 25 focus groups to conduct, first with immigrant youth in the 16-20 age range who had some contact with agencies or organizations that provide services to newcomer youth, and second, with immigrant mothers of such youth. A total of 18 focus groups with youth who came to Canada after 6 years of age were conducted from the beginning of November, 1999 to mid February, 2000. Sixteen focus groups were separately conducted with male and female youth from each of these eight specific ethnic groups: Portuguese, Filipino, Somali, other Northeast African, Iranian, Russian, African, Jamaican, and Korean. In addition, CERIS conducted two ethnically mixed Northeast African groups, one male and one female, comprising youth who were Eritrean, Ethiopian, or Ugandan of Somali ancestry. Seven focus groups were also conducted with mothers from the same ethnic groups as those of the youth interviewed, with the exception of the Northeast African group.

Throughout the focus group discussions, it was clear that some of the young men and women and some of the mothers were particularly insightful, and, despite challenges posed by language for some of them, particularly articulate as well. At the end of the focus groups, therefore, some of them were recruited for in-depth interviews to clarify and expand upon some of the points raised in the focus groups. This was done not to add new topics to the research but simply to enrich the findings in areas discussed, by an elucidation of the experiences common to many immigrant youth and their families; their insights will be included in the amalgamated report.

FINDINGS

1.   Review of the Literature

The review of the literature confirmed the prior experience of the researchers: there is no real attention being paid to this age group. Their needs, whether they came as very young children or as adolescents, have not been systematically documented, nor have services for them

been systematically identified anywhere. What the review did contribute was a sense of the major issues confronting this age group:

X   identity development confounded by dual sources of identity, when home and peer groups come from different cultures;
X   language issues that arise particularly in school;
X   lack of recognition, for older youth, of prior learning experience;
X   conflicts in values beyond those characteristic of many adolescents, namely those between home and peer group, as these conflicts are between values of institutions: those of the family and those of the school as representative of the larger community; and
X   differences in issues for male and female youth that are not necessarily found in all youth's experiences but are characteristic of some cultures in particular.

The review of the literature also identified some programs that are being offered to youth in various locations in Canada. For the purposes of this report, however, we shall limit ourselves to those discussed in depth in the two series of interviews, those with key informants and those in telephone surveys.

Health and Mental Health.   The literature review found a number of significant sources in this area. A federal_provincial study, *Toward a Healthy Future*, reports that "Canadians are among the healthiest people in the world; however this good health is not enjoyed equally by everyone".[1] The country's youth population is suffering from stress which is evident in the increased rates of unhealthy practices, such as heavy smoking, having unprotected sex and dropping out of school, as well as feeling depressed and suicidal. It is argued that stress_related problems among young people are linked to high unemployment and pressure to perform well in school. The same source quotes Shaun Peck, a doctor at the British Columbia Health Department, that dropping out of school early is very damaging to a youngster's future well being: because their chances for secure employment are lower, they will probably be less healthy in the future, given the link shown between income and health. The report is cited as pointing out that the persistent gap in health status between people of high income and low income is most apparent among youth and aboriginal groups.

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[1] The results of the federal_provincial study were reported in William Walker, "Canadians healthier but stress hits young", in The Toronto Star, 17 September 1999, p. 1.

The healthy development and integration of newcomer youth into all spheres of Canadian society is dependent on numerous and often interrelated factors. A primary determinant of physical, social and emotional well being is the family, but several other components characteristic of the newcomer experience can influence the future health status of immigrant youth. The literature review revealed the fundamental importance of these youth being part of a strong and loving family. In addition, studies reveal that a stable family income improves the likelihood of living in safe neighbourhoods and attending good schools. The absence of some or all of these elements in newcomer households often makes it difficult for parents to create a supportive environment that enhances the future well being of their children.

A recent analysis of data obtained from a longitudinal study of children and youth indicates that "30 percent of all immigrant children live in families whose total income fall below the official poverty line" (Beiser et al., 1999). The researchers note that immigrant children with unstable families are "less likely to prosper scholastically and are more likely to become delinquent" (Ibid.). Family stability and ethnic resilience have a considerable impact on the behaviour of immigrant and refugee children. This form of social capital is an essential component of well being and may help foster personal achievement; however data obtained from community_based samples, according to Beiser, suggest that some newcomer children experience greater risk for alcohol abuse, drug addiction, delinquency, depression and Post_Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The socioeconomic environment of newcomer children and adolescents is a determinant of their health and well being. In his book, *Strangers at the Gate: The 'Boat Peoples' First Ten Years in Canada*, Beiser (1999) evaluates the existence of a link between employment and mental health through the analysis of community surveys of refugees and Canadian residents in Vancouver. Beiser found that newcomer youth were twice as likely to suffer from depression than individuals aged thirty_five and older, adding that "statistics on suicide are also consistent in portraying the young as highly distressed and vulnerable" (pp.81_82). He argues that it is essential that job discrimination and economic disparity be alleviated in order to curb increasing

rates of depression among newcomer youth and facilitate their successful integration into Canadian life (p.162).[2]

It is apparent from this review of the literature on newcomer youth that socioeconomic status has a serious impact on the healthy emotional and social development of children and adolescents. Most researchers agree that very little is known about the psychosocial and mental health problems of immigrant children. Both the Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC) and the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) agree that the mental health of immigrants and refugees remains an important priority for service providers (Beiser 1999: 162).

The problems facing newcomer children and youth are numerous and threatening to both their physical and social development. The risk associated with maladaptive experiences is high among children from disadvantaged populations. Most researchers consider the socioeconomic disparity between mainstream and newcomer groups as the primary determinant of negative development (Beiser et al., 1999; Bertrand, 1998; Fralick & Hyndman, 1998; James, 1997; Steinhauer, 1998). Newcomer youth must adjust to a new culture and language, as well as new surroundings and peer expectations. This is difficult to achieve without family stability and economic security. The inability to successfully adapt to the norms of society often results in problems at school and creates a greater risk for substance abuse, delinquency, and depression. Much of the literature on the health and well being of newcomer youth is informed by the theory of ethnic resiliency. Paul D. Steinhauer (1998) defines resiliency as "unusually good adaptation in the face of severe stress and/or the ability of the stressed person to rebound to the pre_stress level of adaptation" (1998: 51). The ability to identify with and respect one's cultural origin can help foster personal resilience and improve the likelihood for healthy development and integration (Beiser et al., 1999).

Delores James (1997) reports that newcomer children and adolescents in the United States experience a variety of cognitive and emotional changes through the absence of their familiar language, culture and community. The subsequent adjustments to life in a new country

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[2] *Strangers at the Gate*, although an invaluable contribution to understanding the life situation of refugees in Canada, is not attempting to present the life of newcomer youth in particular, about which little research exists.

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often result in the increased risk of trauma or psychosocial problems, school failure and drug abuse, as well as other delinquent behaviour. James suggests that "the early identification of immigrant children at risk for these problems can help school personnel and health care providers plan culturally appropriate and effective interventions" (1997: 98). It is believed that many newcomers suffer from anxiety over the loss of all things familiar and experience a "culture shock" that can cause emotional maladjustment (Ibid.: 99). Difficulties with language acquisition and the lack of acceptance by peers can impede the academic performance of a newcomer and be a source of stress.

The support of family, friends and the community can provide a healthy intervention into negative behaviour by allowing children and adolescents to develop ethnic resilience and foster strong social networks (Fralick & Hyndman 1998: 319). Other researchers also cite the need for intervention programs in order to curtail the risk associated with newcomer adaptation (Beiser et al., 1999; Bertrand, 1998; James, 1997; Steinhauer, 1998). Both James and Bertrand stress that children "at risk" must be identified early in order to help service providers plan effective interventions that are culturally appropriate to the unique social and emotional needs of newcomer youth. It is important to note, however, that some researchers consider "at risk" approaches to health to be inadequate because they serve further to isolate and label children.

Early intervention in the education of children is critical for the successful integration of newcomer youth. The experiences of early childhood tend to define one's social and behavioural patterns. Jane Bertrand (1998) considers ways to enrich the pre_school experiences of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and evaluates several initiatives designed to improve their physical, social and mental health. "A child's socioeconomic status, determined by family income, parental occupations and parental education levels, strongly influences the development of the child" (Bertrand, 1998: 8). Bertrand suggests that programs be put in place that focus on children at increased risk for negative social and emotional development. It is essential that children identified as "at risk" be provided with tools to improve their chances at successful adaptation.

James makes several recommendations aimed at improving the delivery of services to immigrant children and adolescents with psychosocial problems. She is careful to point out that school children have unique social and emotional needs. It is important that course work and in_service training programs be developed in order to equip counsellors, nurses, teachers and health educators with the knowledge and experience to deal with children suffering from psychosocial problems. She suggests that culturally appropriate counselling and social services in schools be developed and made widely accessible. James also proposes that suitable diagnostic and assessment tools be tailored to immigrant children and their families, and that a preventative or early intervention program be created in order to identify initial "culture shock" (Ibid.: 102).

Educational Attainment. The literature confirms that social, economic and demographic changes taking place in Canadian society have placed a tremendous amount of pressure on educational systems to respond to the accompanying growth in the diversity of student enrolment. The public school system in Toronto serves an extraordinarily diverse student body. Close to half of the students within the jurisdiction of the Toronto Board of Education (TBE) are from non-English speaking families and represent over 76 language groups (Cheng & Yau, 1997). Between 1992 and 1996, one-third of students attending schools in the TBE came from over 170 countries, and 59 percent of recent arrivals were considered to be "high need". With such a large number of culturally diverse youth, there is a greater demand for services on the local board of education, as well as settlement and ethnocultural organizations. Some of the needs identified by researchers include academic support, parental involvement in the education of children, the recognition of the unique circumstances and experiences of newcomer youth, as well as training for teachers, school staff and settlement workers.

In the introduction to *Learning and Sociological Profiles of Canadian High School Students*, Paul Anisef and Mary Bunch (1994) report that visible minority youth encounter significant challenges coping with the school system. They perform poorly in class, suffer from behavioural problems or drop out of school altogether. Some of the principal factors underlying these problems include school policies, the discriminatory attitudes of teachers, and the

organizational structure of schools where achievement or success among minority youth is not encouraged (Anisef & Bunch 1994: 8-10). This environment has proven to be a negative one for newcomer students. It has led to poor attendance, fostered feelings of hostility towards school and produced an increase in delinquent behaviour. Although many schools now recognize ethnocultural diversity and make efforts to prevent discrimination, Anisef and Bunch assert that visible minority youth "will continue to be at risk unless the system as a whole is actively working to accommodate their differences and needs" (Ibid.: 9).

Larry Lam (1994) maintains that education is considered to be a liberating force towards the equalization of opportunities in an ethnically stratified society; however, many studies have found that equal educational opportunities in Canada are limited for some ethnic groups (Anisef & Okihiro, 1982; Li, 1999). A student's ethnocultural background and socioeconomic status are considered important factors influencing his or her educational progress. Numerous elements, such as teacher biases, economic inequality, and institutional or systemic discrimination, act as barriers for immigrant youth in the attainment of equal educational opportunities. Anisef and Bunch also note the high correlation between socioeconomic status and academic performance. Low-income households often cannot provide an environment conducive to learning since many of these children consume less nutritional foods, have less access to private space for homework, are less likely to own computers, and have parents with lower educational levels. Students from low-income backgrounds also face discriminatory treatment and lower teacher expectations. These elements work together to produce low self-esteem and poor motivation to learn among minority students (Ibid.: 10).

Lam believes that the negative employment experiences of parents may have an adverse effect on their children's decision to leave the school system (1994: 124). The marginalized position of parents may pressure youth to drop out of school in order to work and help support their families. These individuals feel it is more important to enter the labour market and contribute to the family income than to continue studying. They may also learn from their parents' experience that educational success cannot provide them with the means to achieve social status in a high-profile occupational category (Ibid.: 125). A study carried out by the

Canadian Youth Foundation (CYF) indicates that youth in Canada are generally losing confidence in the public school system and post-secondary education. It reports that most youngsters have serious doubts about the value of their education and the ability of schools to prepare them for the job market (CYF 1995: 20). They remain concerned that schools cannot provide adequate skills or direction to help them in the transition from school to work.

While various programs have been created to assist children with their educational progress, such as special education classes and ESL courses, Lam stresses that the school system needs to clarify its objectives: "Are we concerned primarily with ways to assist immigrant youth 'fit in' to the existing educational system or are we concerned with why and how the education system fails to meet their needs?" (1994: 130). The problems facing youth are rooted in socioeconomic inequality and different forms of institutional and systemic discrimination. ESL programs may only temporarily deal with limitations to educational progress and special education classes may only serve to further stigmatize newcomer students in society.

Laura Johnson and Suzanne Peters (1994) report that the diverse needs of Ontario students are often overlooked. Accordingly, they are convinced that there is a need for a more student-based, participatory educational program aimed at accommodating diversity and change. Four principal themes are underscored in their report:

X   the need to address and eliminate race, ethnic, gender and class bias from the school system;
X   the need for a fully integrated educational system to accommodate the diverse needs of all young adult learners;
X   the need to build strong linkages between schools and various sectors of the community; and
X   the need for greater parental involvement (Johnson & Peters, 1994: 441-455).

Like Lam, Johnson and Peters believe that programs such as Heritage Language (HL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) are not sufficient to cope with the problem of alienation causing some immigrant or visible minority students to perform poorly or to leave the education system prematurely. Johnson and Peters state that the problems facing marginalized youth are rooted in institutional and systemic discrimination.

The school system must accommodate the growing diversity of the student population and offer curricula and programs that are relevant to their experiences, learning needs and aspirations (Anisef & Bunch, 1994: 7). It is essential that an effort be made to understand the traditions, learning aptitudes, family structures and moral values of immigrant and refugee youth in order to develop programs designed to meet their educational needs (Lam, 1994: 127). Such an approach could provide much needed support to newcomer youth as they attempt to adapt to the new society.

Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston (1996) explore how aspects of an immigrant culture work as social capital to affect the adaptation experiences of immigrant youth. Their argument is based upon a case study of Vietnamese youth in the United States. They assert that Vietnamese students who possess a stronger association with traditional values, a commitment to work ethic, and are significantly involved in the ethnic community tend to perform remarkably well in school. These values are consistent with the expectations of the ethnic community and reflect a "high level of social integration among Vietnamese youth" (Zhou & Bankston 1996: 821). Zhou and Bankston also report that some studies of Indo-Chinese refugees (Caplan et al., 1989; Gold, 1992) show that culture, family and the sense of belonging to an ethnic community have promoted the need for academic attainment and excellence among Indo-Chinese students. Their research and conclusions, and those of others, indicate that ethnic resources as social capital can provide disadvantaged offspring with an adaptive advantage (Ibid.: 821; Kilbride, 1999).

In a recent literature review on newcomer children and youth in Canada, Morton Beiser, Angela Shik and Monika Curyk similarly note that immigrant children of parents who "demonstrate 'ethnic resilience' perform better [in school] than children whose parents assimilate fully" (Beiser et al., 1999). They report that researchers have underscored "the respect for education embedded in some cultural traditions, parental ambition and enterprise, and the insecurity over minority status" as important factors contributing to the academic success achieved by some newcomer students (Beiser et al., 1999). Donna Deyhle also reports that students who achieve academic success are those who feel securely embedded in their traditional

culture, while those at highest risk for failure in school are those "who feel disenfranchised from their own culture and at the same time experience racial conflict" (Deyhle, 1995: 419-420).

Margaret Gibson writes that "minority youth do better in school when they feel strongly anchored in the identities of their families, communities and peers, and when they feel supported in pursuing a strategy of selective or additive acculturation" (Gibson, 1997: 445-446). Jim Cummins (1997) is similarly concerned with newcomer students' ability to negotiate their cultural identities in a new society. He believes that a more flexible and inclusive framework is needed to account for the variability of academic outcomes and to plan educational interventions to school failure.

The focus group statements of mainly Asian immigrants in Vancouver led Daniel Hiebert (1998) to note that immigrant families often equate their hope for the future with the education of their children. The standard of education and opportunities for children were cited by many as the main reasons for choosing to come to Canada; however, "the disjunction between hopes and actual experiences in schooling and employment often meant a fragile sense of the future and of family settlement in Canada" (Hiebert, 1998: 18-19). When questioned about the adjustment of young people to Canadian society, many participants suggested that while immigrant parents struggle in adapting, "[immigrant] children adjust quickly". Children learn new languages and adapt to cultural expectations more easily than adults, and their locally attained educational qualifications are more readily accepted by Canadian employers (Ibid.: 15).

It is important to note that not all researchers agree that children adapt easily. A study conducted by the Canadian Youth Foundation (CYF) focuses on the problems experienced by immigrant youth who possess educational qualifications from outside Canada. They face a serious amount of difficulty getting recognition for their educational qualifications. The report provides insight into the discontent of newcomer youth, and how systemic problems and economic difficulties may prevent individuals from reaching their goals (CYF, 1995: 21). The problems facing newcomer youth may be more complex than first imagined. More research is needed not only to examine how newcomer youth fare in school, but also to register their views, feelings and sentiments in order to identify the reasons visible minority youth in particular show

poor academic performance or drop out of school. An American study by Lorraine McDonnell and Paul Hill (1993) indicates that older students experience difficulty adapting because they are unprepared for the level of instruction offered in school. The researchers also point out that pressure from family often forces older students out of school in order to find work and provide for the family. A study of newcomer youth on a community college campus in Toronto showed that educational and financial concerns affected the majority of immigrant students, yet the college provided very little assistance in meeting those needs (Kilbride & D'Arcangelo, 2000). In the United States McDonnell and Hill blame local governments for not taking seriously the responsibility for the welfare of immigrant students and for not assisting parents to adjust to economic and civil life (McDonnell & Hill, 1993: 85-86).

New research by Bernard Schissel is underway. *The Voices of Immigrant Children in Canadian Schools* is an interview-based survey project designed to study the behaviours and attitudes of immigrant youth and children in Saskatchewan's elementary and high schools. It will compare immigrant students' experiences in the school system on the basis of socioeconomic-economic status, gender, geography and country of origin. The researchers claim that the "results will provide a significant contribution to the study of immigration, education and integration because of the focus on the 'voices' of students" (Schissel, 1997/98 Funded Research Project)

It is evident from this review of the literature on newcomer youth that academic progress is a significant component of healthy integration. Schools can act as agents of academic and social growth if they adopt appropriate practices designed to help children at risk. Newcomer youth need academic support, parental and community involvement, and cross-cultural understanding of their unique circumstances and experiences. Many of the researchers cited in this paper believe that intervention measures are necessary when a student's ethnocultural background and socioeconomic status risks his/her educational progress.

Lam, like Johnson and Peters, suggests a number of specific programs which they believe will foster a positive school environment and help facilitate the integration process for immigrant youth. The research findings indicate that "a more responsive and flexible approach to

classroom instruction, to the school as a community institution with open boundaries, and to the diversity of learning needs, backgrounds and expectations in our changing population" (Anisef & Bunch, 1994: 13). The recommendations made by Lam, and Johnson and Peters appear to consider the importance of accommodating ethnocultural diversity in the school system, but fail to appreciate the immediate and unique needs of newcomer youth. The proposed programs understand poor academic performance and school absenteeism to be mainly the result of school-related problems, such as teacher biases, inadequate testing methods or the lack of a diverse perspective in the curriculum. Anisef is concerned that they fail to adequately address other factors, such as economic insecurity, unemployment, poor mental health, stress or depression (Anisef, 1998: 279). It is important to note, therefore, that the underlying reasons behind dropping out of school may involve more than those factors that have a direct association with the operation of the school system (Ibid.: 286). Anisef stresses that dropping out of school is not a single act or an event that happens independently of any other factors. It is a process in which different but interrelated factors, ranging from the individual and family to school, community, the job market and government policy, are involved (Ibid.: 289-303). Treating the matter as a process rather than an independent event makes better sense from both a research and "best practice" perspective, but only if an analysis of all those interrelated factors is made *vis-à-vis* the aspirations, goals, choices, opportunities and constraints of the individual actors. A process analysis approach may provide researchers with better analytical tools to examine problems associated with why visible minority youth of certain ethnocultural backgrounds perform poorly in school or choose to drop out.

It is essential that more research be conducted on the relation between educational attainment and the positive adaptation experiences of newcomer youth. The conclusions and recommendations made by several researchers clearly point to the important role played by the school system in promoting settlement and integration. It is apparent that a collaborative and integrative effort must be made in order to meet the needs of newcomer youth most effectively.

Access To Employment And Economic Mobility. The literature indicates that the youth unemployment rate in Canada is reaching critical proportions and the greatest casualties appear

to be newcomer youth. The ability to obtain gainful employment is hampered by their aptitude for learning in the host society. There are numerous factors working together to inhibit academic progress for newcomer children. Their socioeconomic experiences and ethnocultural background make them particularly susceptible to negative influences and discrimination. This has made it increasingly difficult for children and adolescents to acquire the level of skills and training needed to compete in the labour market.

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) reports that there are about two million youth between the ages of 15 and 19 living in Canada. The high unemployment rate is something that affects all youth living in Canada, but an analysis of statistical data reveals that newcomer youth face greater obstacles to employment and are far less likely than Canadian-born youth to have had any kind of work experience. In 1996, there were twice as many immigrants between the ages of 17 and 19 with no previous work-related experience. A correlation was found between socioeconomic background and access to employment opportunities. Youth from low-income families face greater challenges in acquiring job experience than do those living in high- or middle-income families. The same pattern holds true for immigrant youth compared to Canadian-born youth. "Immigrant youth may be at a disadvantage in finding work due to their lack of family contacts in business, their efforts to learn one of Canada's official languages, their responsibilities at home or their families' expectations that they focus solely on school work" (CCSD, 1998b: 8).

The report conducted by the CCSD exposes some of the realities facing newcomer youth when searching for employment. It is obvious that the barriers adolescents cross warrant further attention, but the report does not provide enough data on the needs and concerns specific to immigrant youth, such as family expectations, responsibilities at home or a negative school environment. Although it does not provide any particular information on the physical and mental well being of immigrant youth, the study does examine the impact of work opportunities on the health habits of students, such as alcohol use, smoking, stress and aggressive behaviour.

In *Youth Unemployment: Canada's Rite of Passage*, the Canadian Youth Foundation (CYF) used focus groups to document the experiences of Canadian youth between the ages of 15

and 29. The study sample was a cross-section of middle class, aboriginal, immigrant and street youth. The report reveals that most youth see themselves as "occupationally challenged despite their best efforts to the contrary…They characterize themselves as demoralized job seekers with rapidly diminishing expectations" (CYF 1995b: 1, 7). Many feel dependent on their parents and are forced to delay leading independent lives and starting their own families.

Although the CYF's investigation has primarily explored the attitudinal trends of middle-class youth, it has provided some information on immigrant youth through comparisons with the other cohorts. Researchers for the CYF note that both immigrant and street youth lack the personal networks and support systems to assist them in their search for employment. Middle-class youth have devised individual coping strategies through self-employment and contract work, while immigrant and street youth are found to be completely reliant on government agencies to prepare them for the job market. Participants cited the need for more apprenticeships and practicums and claimed that schools do not provide youth with enough information and counselling at ages early enough to move them to the labour market effectively. In the case of immigrant youth, the report shows that the participants feel "completely ppvulnerable to the government's policies and regulations" (CYF, 1995: 34). Furthermore, as many immigrant participants are reported to have no family to turn to, "they often rely almost exclusively on counselling" (Ibid.) that they receive through community organizations. The study by the CYF does not, however, explore the nature of such counselling in order to assess its efficacy in assisting newcomer and immigrant youth. It does succeed in identifying a set of factors underlying the joblessness of immigrant, aboriginal and street youth, which include "the lack of socioeconomic-economic opportunities, social and cultural barriers or an unwillingness to accept low paying work" (Ibid.).

Paul Anisef (1998) investigates the important transition from school to employment as a primary determinant of socioeconomic advancement or stagnation for newcomer youth. He argues that Canadian schools are failing to adequately prepare adolescents for the job market. His research warns of the particular vulnerability to marginalisation experienced by minority and disadvantaged youth during the transition to adulthood (Anisef, 1998: 275). Anisef examines

two intervention programs, Change Your Future (CYF) and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, which were designed to facilitate the transition from school to work for Canadian youth. CYF targets visible minority youth considered to be at risk for dropping out of school and features individual and group counselling, mentoring, and alternative schooling. The program has been moderately successful in its attempt to understand the transition from school to work as a process that requires support and follow-up (Ibid.: 294-296). OYAP is similar to cooperative education. It helps students obtain job placements to ease the school-to-work transition. The student who participates in OYAP is allowed to develop work-related skills, earn wages, class credits and apprenticeship hours simultaneously. Despite the well-strategized intentions of OYAP, Anisef is critical of the program because employers seem reluctant to hire "at-risk" adolescents (Ibid.: 297-300).

Laura Johnson and Suzanne Peters also consider the correlation between positive employment experiences and the healthy social and economic development of newcomer youth. The nature of employment obtained can impact the chances for economic mobility. Johnson and Peters therefore argue for a strengthened relationship between education and employment (1994: 444-445). They see opportunities for learning and socioeconomic growth for students outside the school and accordingly stress the importance of building links between the school and community. A community initiative, *Community-Based Education for Work, Career and Life* (CWCL), is discussed because it involves a coordination of efforts among schools and labour, industry and government. Cooperative education, training and apprenticeship programs, and community mentoring are also mentioned by the authors as programs that promote learning opportunities for students outside the school (Ibid.: 445).

In addition to the research discussed above, a new study by James Frideres, *Economic Integration: Young Immigrants and Native Born Canadians*, is under way. It will focus on immigrant youth and native-born young Canadians between 18 and 25 years of age who are entering the labour force as full time workers. The sample will be taken in Calgary and the research will explore the process by which young Canadians enter the work force, the nature and type of jobs they obtain or do not obtain, and the issues that confront them as they enter the job

market. The sample will be further divided into visible minority and other youth. The research plan indicates that the first set of interviews has already been completed, and the second set will be carried out in the year 2000 (Frideres, 1996/97 Funded Research Project).

The relation between educational attainment and access to employment is accepted by most researchers. Johnson and Peters suggest that schools need to flexible and adaptable in order to accommodate the unique needs of immigrant youth. Researchers examining the economic opportunities for immigrant youth clearly point to the need for more flexibility in the system in order to respond to the needs, concerns and experiences specific to newcomer youth.

It is evident from this review of the literature that newcomer youth need assistance with the transition from school to work. A strong correlation was found between socioeconomic background and access to employment opportunities. The research revealed that immigrant youth may be at a disadvantage in finding work as a result of their ethnic background, family responsibilities, economic insecurity and difficulties with school. It is essential that more research be conducted aimed at finding ways to facilitate newcomer youth in their transition to adulthood and the search for suitable employment.

With regard to *Social Services,* the dramatic social, economic and demographic changes taking place in Canada have created serious challenges to the delivery of social services. The process of acclimatization, adaptation and integration requires a significant commitment to assistance from the various organizations serving immigrants and newcomers. The early stages of acclimatization and adaptation can also be referred to as the period of settlement when newcomers make initial adjustments to life in a new country as they find suitable and affordable housing, learn the language, and search for employment. Integration is the longer-term process that newcomers experience as they endeavour to become full and equal participants in all the various dimensions of society (CCR, 1998: 14). A greater proportion of the programs offered by service providers has tended to focus on adult newcomers; however it has become increasingly important for these organizations to respond to the needs and concerns of newcomer children and youth as well. Younger immigrants need assistance in order to adjust successfully and to participate fully in Canadian economic, social and political life.

There have been very few research studies or needs assessments targeted specifically to newcomer youth, but those that have been conducted recognize the value of refugee and immigrant serving organizations. The strength of these organizations lies in the potential they carry for the adoption of a diversity of approaches to program development and their roots in the community. They are committed to cost-effective programs that work, are accountable to the community they serve, and take a holistic approach to meeting the needs of their clients (CCR, 1998: 33). The CCR identifies four spheres of settlement and integration where service providers should focus their efforts:

X   Economic integration: includes acquiring skills, entering the job market, and achieving financial independence;
X   Social integration: includes establishing social networks and accessing institutions;
X   Cultural integration: includes adapting various aspects of lifestyle and engaging in efforts to redefine cultural identity; and
X   Political Integration: includes citizenship, voting, and civic participation (CCR 1998, 18).

It is essential that service providers direct their program delivery to these areas of integration. Newcomer youth need assistance with language acquisition, cultural orientation and acceptance, building community networks and accessing employment in order to achieve full participation in Canadian society (CCR, 1998: 10).

A study of socioeconomic and demographic trends in Ottawa-Carleton reveals that the level of education achieved remains the general barrier to employment and socioeconomic advancement (Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton and United-Way/Centraide Ottawa-Carleton, 1999: 12). Beiser, Shik and Curyk (1999) propose a model for the adoption of an integrated approach to service provision that relates migration stresses to a variety of outcomes. They emphasize the importance of self-esteem as a component of well being and as a predictor of achievement. Other researchers have also noted the importance of supporting the culture and first language of newcomer youth groups in order to facilitate their cognitive development and self-esteem (North York Board of Education, 1988; Toronto Board of Education, 1997).

It is commonly accepted that the ability to speak and understand the language of the host society is the key to participation in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres of that

society (CCR, 1998: 23). The most prevalent of services provided is language classes; however upon completion youth typically acquire only a superficial oral fluency (North York Board of Education, 1988). This may not be adequate for their academic achievement or for their social and emotional integration into Canadian society. Several suggestions have been made by researchers to improve services and assist with the integration of newcomer youth. They include peer mentoring, social groups for youth, after-school recreational and academic assistance programs, better monitoring of students once they leave ESL classes, better access to services, and greater sensitivity from mainstream society to the needs and experiences of newcomers.

The increase in poverty and the need for emergency social support has come at a time when the voluntary sector has been struggling to maintain its standard of operations in the face of federal government cutbacks to the social safety net. Several programs have been developed as a response to the needs of children from disadvantaged populations. Research into child nutrition indicates that malnutrition can alter intellectual development by interfering with a child's overall health, energy level, rate of motor development and rate of growth. In October 1998, the Ministry of Education provided a $500,000 grant to schools in Ottawa's Carleton School Board for programs that would provide students with breakfast before classes. The school breakfast program has spread to 38 elementary schools in Ottawa-Carleton with extra funding from organizations and local businesses (Clifford, 1999).

Meneses (1999) suggests that, in addition to the collective efforts of community agencies, schools and government departments, an attempt must be made to provide innovative ways to meet newcomer needs and provide services. The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIAR) and the Centre for Studies of Children at Risk (CSCR) describe one such method in their 1995 report. A west end Toronto shopping mall was experiencing a decrease in business as a result of loitering youth and a subsequent increase in criminal activity. The mall management recognized the extent of the problems and challenges confronting youth. In collaboration with these youth, as well as parents, local schools, police and other community resources, a Youth Services Office was opened in the mall. It provided many services, including culturally sensitive counselling and community support services to youth and their families: the municipal

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government hired a youth counsellor, and the local board of education offered alternative educational opportunities on site.

Lack of information is a serious problem for many newcomers. The majority of respondents to a survey in Halton (Meneses, 1999) had little or no knowledge about the critical issues that they would have to deal with in their settlement process. Other than receiving the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) and making an appointment with a doctor, few knew how to access other health care services (e.g.: mental health, drug and alcohol problems, and nutrition). Respondents to the Halton survey (Meneses, 1999) indicated that one of their concerns was the lack of information. It is clear from the literature that it is essential that the newcomer understand more than just how to access services. Respondents in this study requested information about a multitude of topics, such as Canadian culture, parental roles, the expectations of the education system and the roles of teachers, as well as acceptable behaviour and mainstream values.

A report by Yau (1995) proposed the development of a Public Information Office in schools in collaboration with community, government and ethnocultural groups. The offices would provide comprehensive packages in a variety of languages which could include legal, health care, housing, and citizenship information, as well as information about the school system, community services and other pertinent information. In addition, the office could act as a referral service for students and families. It is apparent that a collaborative effort must be made in order to meet the needs of newcomer youth most effectively. The recommendations made by several researchers allude to the important role played by the school system in promoting settlement and integration. It can be used as a forum for disseminating information, gaining access to families and consequently inviting greater participation in their children's education, referring newcomers to services, and assisting mainstream society to become more culturally sensitive to the needs and experiences of newcomers.

The literature reviewed remarks on the lack of understanding about the specific needs and cultural backgrounds of newcomer youth. These individuals are struggling to reconcile two separate cultural existences as they attempt to adjust to the social norms of the host society while

maintaining their own heritage. They also face linguistic and cultural barriers when accessing services, as well as racism and discrimination in every day life (Spigelblatt, 1999).

Research also shows how essential it is that services be developed to help newcomer youth develop the skills and knowledge they need to participate in society. Some of the recommendations made by researchers include orientation sessions, providing information and referrals, language assessment, family counselling and support groups, and mental health services and health programs (CCR, 1998: 37).

There must also be services to help the host community in its process of adaptation to newcomers, such as public education, cross-cultural and anti-racism training (CCR, 1998: 40). The CCR identify several best practices for offering services to newcomer youth. The researchers stress that accessibility must be assured by offering culturally appropriate services in the client's language and undertaking outreach in the community. It is evident that collaboration and flexibility in program development is needed in order to best facilitate the process of integration for newcomer youth. A holistic approach would recognize the diversity of needs of ethnocultural groups, provide a range of social services, and build linkages between the community, family, youth and mainstream institutions (CCR: 1998: 45).

2.   In_depth Interviews with 15 Key Informants (Conducted by the Centre for

Evaluative Research in Human Services at Ryerson Polytechnic University)

Analysis of the issue must start with a recognition that youth have specific needs within this age group and then additional specific needs as immigrants, said key informants. Youth need to develop their cultural as well as personal identity. Specifically, the interviews provided pointed information under some of the target areas of interest. For *Education*, the informants claimed that education is the greatest concern for youth 16 to 20 years of age and they badly need services to foster their successful integration within the school system, English language training programs, such as ESL classes genuinely tailored to their level and oriented toward academic learning, and curricula that reflect the experiences of immigrants and refugees and are responsive to their cultural needs. Those close to these youth believe it critical to have a greater number of

teachers from different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Providing services in school_based programs is the most important component of design for these youth, since this is the place of greatest contact; these services include counselling and support services, welcoming and reception centres, mentoring and tutoring programs, and assessment services to determine appropriate school placement. Schools need to recognize their role in orienting parents and students to the school system to better prepare newcomer youth for success; and educators should be sufficiently sensitive and experienced that they can offer programs to serve as a bridge between the school and family, and support rather than disrupt the relationship between parents and youth. *Missing* services abound. School_based ESL courses should be available to both non_English speaking newcomer youth and youth who speak English with a foreign dialect (such as those from the West Indies), and these should be designed to bring youth up to their own age level (so that youth are not singled out or harassed because of language barriers). Language Instruction for Newcomers in Canada (LINC) programs are much more widely available to adults than youth, and these programs should be matched by programs for immigrant youth. Integrated International Language Programs ("Heritage Language" Programs) are available only at the elementary school level, but should be available at the secondary level as well.

For their ***Health*** needs the key informants reported that immigrant youth require better health information about a range of issues (from smoking to AIDS), and improved training of health officials who come in contact with newcomer youth. Also important is a good and genuinely accessible referral service.

For ***Mental Health*** they identified as basic needs adequate housing for youth with mental health problems, and assistance in coping with adjustment as a newcomer, resolving personal identity issues, and balancing pressure from family to maintain old values as well as pressure from peers to adopt new ones. There is a lack of services to help youth form their cultural identity, as well as a lack of services to help youth form their own personal identity. Some youth have serious problems, and for them there is a need for professional and culturally appropriate help for dealing with psychiatric problems. Preventive measures are even more important, in a

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FINAL REPORT TO THE SETTLEMENT DIRECTORATE, ONTARIO REGION, CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA
FROM THE JOINT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR RESEARCH ON IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT -- TORONTO

way, beginning with those dealing with issues as basic as low self esteem. There must also be a recognition that youth are at risk for violence as a result of a number of factors (including alienation, lack of integration, peer pressure, response to harassment, vulnerability from being at high risk for school dropout, racism and discrimination, culture_specific gangs, and limited English language skills). Family_oriented support and youth counselling to address the stress on families who undergo a decrease in living standards and other migration_linked stressors are likewise important prevention measures.

Regarding the *Social Services* needs of youth the key informants specified the need for services that address issues arising from family violence and the stresses families undergo who sponsor their children to join them in Canada. Support for them is needed, including a better understanding of the role of families in supporting newcomer youth, and the adjustments resulting from this type of family reunification. Difficulties arise in meeting basic needs like accessible and affordable housing, adequate clothing (for example, winter coats and boots), and appropriate and accessible recreational programs, all of which could be eased by appropriate and sensitive social services. These should be available and accessible to all newcomer youth and their families, regardless of racial, ethnic, or cultural group, location, or other restrictions, and there is a clear need for services to be developed to address the specific needs of certain often_neglected groups, notably, women. Repeatedly the informants requested better training for those who come into contact with newcomer youth (for example, teachers, mental health professionals and immigration officials). There is a lack of positive role model programs to raise the expectations for education and employment opportunities, as well as a lack of culture_specific services available to youth in their first language, offered by a professional of the same racial, ethnic or cultural background (for example, there is a lack of self_help programs for Muslims with substance abuse problems like Alcoholics Anonymous, which is inappropriate because it assumes a Christian philosophy). At the same time, there is a need to balance the existing but sparsely available services, the majority of which are currently geared toward the needs of adult male immigrants, with services for unserved or under served groups in general. Needed is a good evaluation of the current services, which is important before planning funding

services on a "best practices" approach. There is also a need, informants stated, for immigration officials to be made aware of the existing services for newcomer youth so that they may facilitate appropriate and timely referrals for youth upon entry to Canada

Finally, under needs related to ***Employment***, the least often mentioned by key informants, there is a need for services to educate youth about labour market standards in Canada, in order to reduce the culture shock experience. There is also a need for programs to provide job_related language assistance, to overcome the barriers to employment.

### 3.	Telephone Survey of 145 Agencies Providing Services to

Newcomers (Conducted by the Institute for Social Research at York University)

The Institute for Social Research at York University (ISR) asked service providers about the programs and practices that meet the needs of newcomer youth exceptionally well and about problems that organizations face when they serve newcomers between the ages of 16 and 20 years of age. In total, ISR selected 287 agencies and drew a sample from five distinct sources, including: SEPT schools; the OCASI membership directory; immigration services and youth services listed in the Blue Book Directory of Community services in Toronto and referrals from agencies selected from these listings. The overall response rate was 64.2 per cent or 145 completions.

The agencies are drawn from five broad service sectors (education, employment, health, mental health and social services) and multi-service or umbrella organizations. They vary in size and length of time they have provided services.

Most (94 per cent) have programs and services available to newcomer youth although neither an exclusive focus on youth nor an exclusive focus on newcomer youth is the norm. About one quarter have less than 5 per cent of their newcomer clientele between the ages of 16 to 20 years. For slightly over one quarter of the agencies, newcomer youth make up more than 20 per cent of their newcomer clientele.

The newcomer youth served by these agencies are culturally and racially diverse. Around three-quarters of the agencies assist newcomer youth from five or more cultural and/or racial

backgrounds. About one in ten agencies serve youth from one specific ethnic group. The

newcomer youth served have difficulty communicating in English. Only 7 per cent of the

agencies report no English language difficulty among their newcomer youth clientele; 27 per

cent report English-language difficulty for three-quarters of their newcomer youth clientele.

Newcomer youth must overcome a variety of barriers in order to adapt to Canadian society. The

most serious barriers identified by the agencies in the survey are: lack of fluency in English;

culture shock (differences between native and Canadian culture and values); intergenerational

conflict and poor school integration.

ISR summarized important aspects of service delivery reported by the agencies as

follows:

X   ***Meeting multiple needs.*** Referrals for assistance elsewhere, health information,
        counselling for social adjustment and family counselling for intergenerational issues are
        each provided by over half of the agencies. Counselling for cultural and/or personal
        identity, employment services, recreational and social opportunities, assistance for basic
        needs, English language instruction, school level and school readiness assessments and
        counselling for religious identity are addressed by smaller proportions. Around 88 per
        cent offer four or more of these 14 types of assistance to newcomer youth.

C   ***Matching the language and cultural background of staff with those of the newcomer
        youth served.*** Eighty-five per cent report having some staff or volunteers from the same
        cultural/racial background as the youth served. Eight-two per cent offer some services in
        the language(s) spoken by their newcomer youth clientele.

C   ***Evaluation of services.*** A majority report that they evaluate their programs in order to
        assess how newcomer youth respond to their services. The actual evaluation methods
        vary.

C   ***Serious barriers to effective service delivery.*** The most challenging service delivery
        issues are inadequate funding, the variability of needs by different cultural and/or racial
        backgrounds, variability of needs by gender and lack of interagency coordination. Other
        barriers include eligibility criteria, lack of awareness of available services and inadequate
        staffing.

Programs and practices described as meeting the needs of newcomer youth especially

well are varied; survey respondents reported to ISR on program content and implementation

procedures. With respect to *content*, practical aids to assist integration into the institutional life of

Canadian society, aids to social and psychological integration, providing referrals, and programs

specifically for newcomer youth seem to be the dominant themes. Three aspects of *process* stand

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FINAL REPORT TO THE SETTLEMENT DIRECTORATE, ONTARIO REGION, CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA
FROM THE JOINT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR RESEARCH ON IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT -- TORONTO

out: staffing, individualized attention, and newcomer youth involvement in program planning and delivery. The provision of ethnically specific programs and community based services reference both content and process and seem directly related to issues of access and outreach. The agencies surveyed made suggestions for improving services to newcomer youth. The most prevalent recommendations were for increased funding, more programs for newcomer youth, better interagency coordination, better access to services and greater outreach and marketing to increase awareness of available services.

Elements of Best Practice in Different Service Sectors: Patterns that appear quite definitely in the overall data are less visible in a sector by sector examination of education, employment, health and mental health, and social services. There are likely several reasons for this but two factors are especially important in this regard. One concerns how a sector is defined; the other relates to the nature of the data.

Sector has been defined as the service sector of the respondent. This means that the data for each sector consist of the comments made by respondents whose agency falls into that sector even though those comments may refer to a program or service in quite a different sector. This difficulty is compounded because many of the organizations surveyed offered more than one kind of service and because respondents sometimes spoke about specific programs and sometimes about organizations.

 ISR described their data as "wide ranging and layered", but also "thin", since answers may reflect a sense that a practice is good because it is ethnospecific, while other answers may identify the single focus of the program as providing excellence, rather than its specific clientele. They encourage us, therefore, to read their sector analysis in the light of concerns about the thinness of the data, the multi-service nature of some organizations, and the willingness of respondents to speak of many needs and services of youth, rather than just those in their sector. They suggest their interpretations should be thought of as merely pointing at directions for further research rather than as offering definitive identifications of sectoral "best practices".

Education: Nineteen respondents from the education sector (including language instruction agencies) made comments about a variety of program types. Educational and social

programs were identified in equal numbers followed by employment related services with health and mental health programs also mentioned. References to content-oriented best practices were diverse and included proper contacts for good referrals, reliable referrals, holding workshops, sustaining interest and combining educational components with socializing and recreational components of programs. Programs tailored specifically for youth, providing language instruction, health care, a drop-in centre, goal-oriented language and employment services and the provision of practical job training were also described as outstanding because of their content.

With respect to process-oriented best practices, respondents in the Education sector seemed to put equal emphasis on the quality of teachers, staff and volunteers and on individualized attention through low staff/student ratios. Other process-oriented references to best practices were about ESL programs with a strong curriculum base and employment services that matched the ethnicity of employers and youth. Language instruction respondents referred to one-on-one counselling in a job training program, individualized ESL instruction, peer counsellors in a school drop-out program, the quality and availability of staff for a school-based settlement project as well as parental involvement and client evaluation for a family conflict resolution program as outstanding aspects of these services.

Several programs for Caribbean youth (including tutoring and youth employment) were seen as outstanding because they were specific to one ethnic group. A reference to a settlement program that addressed the specific cultural needs of newcomers also suggests that service providers in the educational field see ethnic specificity as important. Being in a school and part of it made one ESL program stand out while a youth drop-in program at a community centre and a Caribbean youth tutoring service were described as exemplary because they were for those in the local area or had a central location easily accessible by public transit. Location within the local residential community was also mentioned in connection with a community centre program where youth created videos and web pages for local businesses.

Employment: Twenty-five respondents from the employment sector identified programs and practices they believed were outstanding. The programs are interesting in two respects.

First, the majority are social, with housing and shelter referenced more often than by respondents from other sectors. Employment related programs/services are the next most prevalent but programs directed at education, health and mental health are also named.

The second interesting aspect of comments by employment sector respondents is that four specific agencies are identified by more than one respondent. It may be informative to summarize the comments made about these four agencies:

One agency was extolled for a number of its programs, beginning with one preparing young people for adult life. Another program focuses on self esteem, provides education and counselling and breaks down traditional barriers in recreation. In particular, the agency's drug prevention and AIDS awareness programs are successful and increase awareness of prevention strategies. Another program was cited because of its anti-racism projects, seen as particularly helpful for youth. And finally, this agency hired newcomer youth, not only providing employment but also aiding societal integration through youth participation in service delivery.

Characteristics of a second agency that were identified as outstanding include: a specific focus on youth (a very frequent comment); coordination with other agencies; flexible, diverse and comprehensive programs; and the use of self exploration and self awareness tools for job search programs.

A third agency was praised because of its content (English language instruction that improved communication skills), general aspects of its creativity, the diversity of its clientele, and its practice of involving youth in service delivery.

The fourth agency was seen as outstanding because of the diversity of work force training, open eligibility and the provision of services off site in different local communities.

Overall, the comments of employment sector respondents were more often about content and goals than about process, location or ethnic specific services. Within the domain of content and goals, aspects of institutional integration (job placements, job and career preparation, women's needs, housing) were most prevalent followed by an emphasis on programs tailored specifically for youth. Assistance for social and psychological integration and providing information through referrals and counselling were more minor references.

With respect to process and implementation, the emphasis seems to be on individualized attention, empathetic and qualified staff, appropriate language of service delivery and involving youth in program planning and delivery. There appears to be slightly more emphasis on the importance of local and accessible locations for programs than on the desirability of services tailored to a specific ethnic group. Eight of the programs mentioned were, however, ethnically specific.

*Health***:** Half of the programs and/or services identified as outstanding by the eight respondents from the Health Sector focused on health issues (such as planned parenthood, teenage sex information, women's health or mental health). Three of these were specific to a particular ethnic community but respondents did not know what made them outstanding.

Location in schools and local community centres was important for the delivery of planned parenthood and community health programs as well as to disseminate information targeted particularly at youth.

While the knowledge and expertise of staff was cited for the counselling and advocacy work of one organization dealing with refugee claims, accessibility seems to underlie comments about best practices identified for housing, sex information and planned parenthood programs. The actual descriptions include "open to all", "serves youth from diverse backgrounds", " available in a variety of languages", "user friendly"and "approachable". For one program, the participation of newcomer youth in planning advocacy and life skills services was seen as outstanding.

Mental Health: Eight respondents from the Mental Health sector identified 14 programs and/or services they felt were outstanding. Unfortunately, "don't know" answers were given for five programs. The remaining nine programs are diverse and do not necessarily focus on mental health. The very diversity of the services provided by the social workers of a local school board and several neighbourhood community centres was singled out as exemplary. Art therapy programs were seen as effective since youth express themselves without having to use words and diagnosis does not need to rely on verbal communication. A program dealing with intergenerational conflict was described as outstanding because of parental involvement. The

primary health care provided by a multi-service project was seen as outstanding because of access to free health care, low drug costs, its programs about sexuality tailored especially for youth, and the availability of translators. The quality and commitment of staff, individualized life skills programs and youth involvement in service delivery were also characteristics of these programs. One program was ethnically specific.

Social Services: Twenty-seven respondents from the Social Services sector (including settlement and referral agencies) identified around fifty programs as outstanding. While the majority seemed to provide social services, programs directed at education, employment, health and mental health were also identified. Thirteen ethnically specific program were referred to; three organizations were mentioned more than once.

The majority of descriptors are content oriented; many are about process and relatively few relate to the importance of location or ethnic specific services. With respect to content and goals as they relate to best practice, there appears to be an emphasis on institutional integration, in particular for employment-related issues. Aids to social and psychological integration, with a focus on intergenerational issues, were more often mentioned than providing information through referrals.

Process and implementation aspects of best practices identified by respondents from the Social Services sector highlight skilled staff, the language facility of staff, getting feedback from clients, youth involvement in service delivery, good facilities and internal organization, but otherwise seem wide ranging. Additional elements include staff accompanying youth to government offices, culturally sensitive staff and good supervision.

Umbrella or multi-service organizations: Nine respondents from umbrella or multi-service agencies identified 21 outstanding programs. Leaving general descriptors (such as "do well with little resources", "helps adaptation" or "understand the issues") to one side, the comments of these respondents are mostly about program content or goals. The positive focus of a transition program at a neighbourhood community centre, the priority status given youth in CRDD adjudication, the recreation and health education available at a Friday night drop-in

program, the diverse services of two large organizations, a newcomer youth centre and programs that reduce isolation, explore fears or reassure youth are examples.

Respondents from umbrella or multi-service organizations made fewer comments about process of implementation aspects of best practices. Included are: program evaluation by newcomer youth; assistance to and coordination with other agencies; working in small groups, staff professionalism and staff leadership.

4. Focus Groups

Major findings from this phase, the lengthiest portion of the work, are rich in their potential for elucidating the needs and concerns of immigrant youth. They also shed light on the perspectives regarding the services offered and those not available in the five sectors of education, health, mental health, social services, and employment, although this was not the focus of their discussions. Education was, as we shall see.

Findings differ according to the ethnicity and gender of the participants; some are corroborated by the mothers, but some findings are exclusively the mothers' insights. Some key findings are:

X   Difficulties upon arrival differ according to whether the family immigrates as a unit or whether parents arrived first; length of separation in multi_staged migration added significantly to adjustment problems, but there is very little understanding of this;

X   Difficulties in success in the educational system were experienced differently for males and females: females seemed to have less trouble being accepted by teachers and have less trouble in succeeding academically; males had far more trouble with violence, bullying, and racial incidents;

X   Males reported experiences of racism in general more frequently than did females; Portuguese as well as officially "visible minority" youth reported such experiences; and racist behaviour occurred between different visible minority groups, including between those of Northeast African heritage like the Somalis and those of Southern African heritage, like most Canadian Blacks;

X   Language difficulties were enormous upon arrival, even for those with non_standard English, and the help provided was inadequate and inappropriate (not serving to bring them up to the academic level that they wanted);

X   Females commonly experienced more difficulty within the home as a result of the clash of cultural values between old and new cultures; males commonly experienced more

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FINAL REPORT TO THE SETTLEMENT DIRECTORATE, ONTARIO REGION, CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA
FROM THE JOINT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR RESEARCH ON IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT -- TORONTO

difficulties outside the home: in school, job_seeking, and with other institutions like the police.

X   Females, except for Somali females, found support structures more available to them; this may be in part because those who are Christian cite support from churches more often; only Korean males cited the Churches as a source of support;

X   Youths who are Black, both males and females, believed it is difficult to be Black in Canada;

X   While the school is the key site for integrating newcomer youth into Canada, it has few if any trained personnel whose responsibility this is, and rarely any programs to facilitate their success.

The findings from the focus groups cannot fairly be fitted into the five major categories, although their recommendations can. The young people and their mothers had very clear topics in their discussions, and these emerged independently of any questions designed to identify needs, services, and emerging "best practices" under the headings of education, employment, health and mental health, and social services. Instead, it became clear that for the youth, school-related issues were the overarching concern, with other social issues (never health, except indirectly) secondary to what goes on in school. Across all groups, youth and mothers reported a variety of agencies and individuals who aided them in Canada. These agencies and individuals included ethnic_based community organizations, recreation centres, schools, friends, relatives, guidance counsellors, teachers, religious organizations, and sports teams/clubs. They tended to be mentioned in passing, rather than as a topic of prolonged reflection. This discussion will therefore follow the headings that arose in these focus groups.

Education and the Challenge of Language

Across all groups, language was a primary source of tension, crisis, and struggle. For Iranian, Russians Somali, Korean, African, and Filipino immigrant groups --whose first languages were not English-- the issue of language produced heightened stress. Participants discussed struggles with language most often in relation to academic and social hardships in school.

Most youth regardless of gender cited learning English as a tremendous difficulty, although a few girls showed greater optimism with language learning than boys. Mothers of all immigrant groups identified language acquisition as a major source of struggle in their own lives and those

of their children. Specifically, many of the mothers across the groups remarked that their lack of English language skills contributed to the hardships they faced in Canada and the loss of respect and self- esteem they experienced.

Some of the Russian mothers did not feel that their children experienced many problems with learning English, and in fact these woman expressed optimism with regard to their children's progress with language acquisition. The Russian youth, however, identified language as a problem that they faced when they first came to Canada. Mothers debated whether their children were using enough English outside of the classroom. Across many groups, debates ensued regarding the pros and cons, in relation to second language acquisition, of living and attending school in areas with high concentrations of students speaking other languages. It was debated whether going to a school with a lot of other ESL students increased or decreased opportunities to learn English. The Korean and Russian mothers spoke about basing their residential and subsequent home buying choices on their selection of schools and fostering optimal conditions for the second language acquisition skills of their children.

The issue of language for Jamaican youth was played out differently, but nonetheless was seen as a source of struggle and tension, as noted by mothers and both male and female youth. Many Jamaican youth and mothers spoke about discrimination against Jamaican accents and noted that they were routinely placed into ESL classes, despite the fact that English is their first language.[3]

Education and the Difficulty of Accurate Grade and Level Placements

Common among all immigrant youth's and mothers' groups, concern was expressed around the placement of youth into academically_appropriate grades and levels of course work at the secondary level (Basic, General or Advanced). For most immigrant groups there was general frustration and disillusionment with schools placing students into levels lower than they felt they

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[3] Could societal forms of anti-black racism use discrimination based on accent to marginalize these students? Lippi-Green (1998) has provocatively explored discrimination based upon accent in her book titled English with an Accent. She contends that in North American societies such as the US, people who speak with an accent are subsequently objects of discrimination.

were capable of. Language difficulties, racism, and discrimination against immigrants were identified by youth and parents as often being linked to placements into lower level classes or grades. Only very few students and parents noted guidance counsellors as helpful. In fact, many youth noted guidance counsellors as being implicated in the many problems these youth faced. The current findings suggest that other immigrant, non_English speaking students (as well as African_Canadians) are also experiencing systemic and structural streaming into low levels of study and manifesting poor academic achievement. [4]

Marked gender differences were observed in the Portuguese and Jamaican groups in this regard. In the Portuguese youth group, males reported more problems in school than did females. In the Jamaican youth groups males expressed greater desire for Basic level courses, whereas Jamaican girls were eager to be placed in an Advanced level.

The Jamaican male group also differed with regards to other "black" groups such as African_born and Somali youth groups in that the Jamaicans preferred Basic levels and college education, while the latter groups were desirous of Advanced level courses and university education. This calls attention to important intra_group differences within the broad pan_African category of "black" or "African Canadian" and validates the current study's focus on differing countries of origin as implicated in post_immigration and settlement issues, including schooling.

Education and School Violence

Several groups identified school violence, bullying and extortion as problems they faced. Many Somali males and one Filipino male talked about experiencing violence first hand, bullying and/or extortion. The Somali youth pointed to Jamaican Canadian youth as the perpetrators and the Filipino youth spoke about being severely beaten by a gang of Chinese youth. This points to a dynamic of youth violence that involves two "minority" groups. During

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[4] Scholars (Dei, 1996; Dei et al., 1997; Braithewaite & James, 1996) have written about the systemic streaming of African_Canadian students into Basic levels of education. These writers identify structural and systemic racism endemic to the school system and larger society as contributing to the high levels of drop out and low achievement of black students.

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the Korean male focus group, much aggressive racism was articulated by several of the youth towards African Canadians.

In terms of gender differences, none of the young women across the groups mentioned violence as a problem__although many females talked about being teased by other girls because they were immigrants, did not speak English, or were new to schools. Many of the males across all the various youth groups identified the prevalence of physical fights in the younger grades of schooling. Many noted that these fights were initiated by other students who usually teased the youth for their inability to speak English. These playground altercations, however, did not translate into physical violence in the older grades for groups other than the Somalian and Filipino groups. The Jamaican male youth group did not speak about school violence as a problem or issue of concern. However, many alluded to tensions within the category of "Black." Violence between Somali and Jamaican youth was at least alluded to in such remarks.

Education and Religious Tension within Schools

Several male Somali youth, but none of their female counterparts, spoke about their problems with prayer time in schools. These males remarked that many teachers did not support their desire to pray during school time. These youth were not permitted a prayer room in the school and were also penalized by some teachers for leaving class for prayer. This gave rise to tension between some Somali male youth and the schools.

Education and the Lack of Respect for Teachers

Many youth across groups reported being surprised at the lack of respect given to teachers in Canada. They also mentioned that there was considerable peer pressure to be disrespectful and "talk back" to teachers. Filipino males and Jamaican, Korean and Iranian females reported that in their own countries, teachers are treated with the utmost respect, so they were surprised to discover that teachers were not held in high esteem in Canada. In fact, one Filipino youth remarked that Filipino immigrant youth, who have been raised to respect teachers, feel intense peer pressure to talk back to their teachers in order to gain the respect of their peers.

The Devaluation of Foreign Credentials

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FINAL REPORT TO THE SETTLEMENT DIRECTORATE, ONTARIO REGION, CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA
FROM THE JOINT CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR RESEARCH ON IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT -- TORONTO

Many youth and mothers' groups identified the depreciation of foreign education and professional credentials by Canadian authorities as a source of problems within the family. Male and female Iranian and Jamaican youth, in particular, decried the depreciation of their parents' credentials. Several Iranian and Russian males were very articulate in describing how, in addition to economic hardship, the disillusionment stemming from devalued credentials ultimately led to tensions within the family as members worried about the possibility of future career security.

Social Services and Poverty

Many youth were concerned with the poverty they faced in Canada. The Jamaican, Russian and Iranian youth linked their struggles with poverty to the devaluation of their parents' credentials in Canada. The Portuguese male youth associated much of their poverty with racism against Portuguese people and their restriction to low-paying cleaning occupations. Some youth identified the high cost of post-secondary education as an additional exacerbation of problems arising from poverty and discrimination against immigrants in the work force.

Policing

Two groups spoke at length about frustrations with the police in the GTA. These were the Jamaican male group and the Portuguese male group, who reported problems with police harassment. Jamaican mothers reported difficulties with children staying out all-night and getting into trouble with the law. Jamaican youth criticized the widespread stereotype of Jamaicans as drug dealers as contributing to the problems of over-policing.

Intergenerational Tensions and Conflicts

Across many groups youth identified tension with their parents over issues around curfew, clothing, lengthy family separation, and lack of respect for teachers.

Curfew: Somali girls were quite outspoken about tension with their parents. Some of these girls explained that in following Islamic tradition, parents were very strict with their daughters. According to one girl, this meant that she had to go home right after school instead of meeting her friends. Similarly, some of the Portuguese girls observed that while their younger

brothers were permitted to go out late at night, they were not allowed to do so. Portuguese males, however, did not report as much tension between themselves and their parents as did their female counterparts. The Jamaican mothers remarked that their attempt to prevent their children from staying out late so that they would not get into trouble with the law created friction in their homes.

Several youth commented that in their opinion, their parents became stricter after coming to Canada. For instance, some Korean female and male youth noted that, after moving to Canada, their parents wanted them to focus solely on studying and did not permit them to engage in extracurricular activities. A Korean female youth remarked that the intense pressure to succeed academically caused her tremendous frustration and this gave rise to tension between her and her parents. Similarly, most of the Iranian male youth also noted that intense parental pressure for academic success created tension between them and their parents.

Fashion: Both male and female youth across several groups mentioned that the intense pressure to dress fashionably as defined by their Canadian peers was a source or stress for them. Several noted that the repercussions of not dressing well included teasing, ostracism, and loneliness. Several male Russian youth noted that the clothes they brought from Russia were not fashionable in Canada and in order to "fit in", they felt the need to dress like other students in their schools. This caused substantial tension between the youth who wanted to buy their own apparel and their parents who disliked the way Canadian youth dressed and wanted to purchase clothing for them..

Lengthy Separations: Two groups stand out in terms of noting lengthy family separations as a source of difficulty between them and their parents, the Jamaican and Filipino groups. In both groups, the mothers came to Canada to work as domestics or babysitters and their families, or in some instances, just the children, followed. Several Filipino and Jamaican youth noted that having spent several years apart from their mothers and/or fathers led to tension when they were re-united. These tensions resulted in a lack of trust between youth and their parents and difficulties in the children adjusting to new rules and sources of authority

Gender Discrimination and Sexism: Many female youth across groups reported a double standard in the way parents treated sons and daughters; girls were expected to maintain traditional roles such as cooking and cleaning, while males had more freedom. While some males across groups admitted to such differences, other males did not acknowledge any gender differences. For example, several Jamaican male youth remarked that Canada was a "woman's" country where women had more power than men. Other youth, such as the Somali males, acknowledged that because of their Muslim faith, Somali girls faced stricter regulation from their parents. As adults, Filipino mothers expressed the most blatant experiences of sexism and racism in comparison to other mothers' groups. One woman who works as domestic worker described her exploitation by her employer who took her passport from her..

Loss of Power of Mothers: Many mothers noted that in moving to Canada, they experienced a considerable reduction in their power *vis-a-vis* their children. This loss of power was often linked to their inability to speak English and their subsequent dependence on their children (many of whom were also just learning English) to translate for them. This role reversal often contributed to a loss of respect and confidence.

Several mothers also spoke of how their children would often express anger and disillusionment towards their parents for having immigrated to Canada. The youth blamed their parents' decision to move to Canada for the severe decline in the family's comfort, socioeconomic-economic status, and satisfaction levels. The sentiments expressed by their children caused much suffering for these mothers.

Sources of Assistance and Support: The youth and their mothers spoke of specific sources of support that they received during the settlement and integration experience. These are listed at the end of this Report.[1]

CONCLUSION

At the outset, we indicated that the purpose of this report was to identify the needs and concerns of newcomer immigrant youth and the "best practices" offered by organizations which provide educational, employment, health and social services for supporting the integration of

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youth from diverse cultural and racial groups. To accomplish this task we conducted an extensive review of literature, held in-depth personal interviews with fifteen key informants, surveyed staff at 145 service provider organizations and conducted focus groups with male and female newcomer youth, aged 16-20, and with immigrant mothers of youth in this same age group. The four sources provided lengthy lists of recommendations.[2]

The literature review confirmed our evaluation that very little research has been conducted with regard to the needs and concerns of newcomer youth in this age group. At the same time, however, we learned from key informants, service providers, newcomer youth and immigrant mothers that there is actually much to be concerned about. Thus, all sources revealed that newcomer youth face great difficulty communicating in English and these language problems often relate to settlement issues including: the adjustment to a new culture; obtaining necessary information to facilitate settlement in key areas such as education, employment and health; performing well in school; and adapting to the social climate within schools. Though language acquisition is particularly important for enhancing integration, our study indicates that there are many other factors involved in this process. Newcomer youth arrive in Canada at different stages of their life course development and from cultures that are often quite distinct. Age of arrival, differences in cultural values, societal intolerance in the form of racism, and inter-generational conflicts involving peers and family members are all linked to stresses experienced by these youth. While the majority of newcomer youth are protected by what social scientists refer to as "ethnic resilience", a significant minority must confront and resolve dual sources of identity (e.g., peer group *vs* family values) and family poverty. The stresses that result from these pressures may then place them at greater risk of delinquency, dropping out of school, alcohol and drug addiction or depression.

These findings, already complex, must also incorporate the effects of gender and ethnicity, as our literature review and focus group results illustrate. Male and female newcomer youth experience the challenges of settlement and integration in different ways and these differences may be strongly influenced by whether the family immigrates as a unit or whether parents arrive first in Canada. Females may clash more with their parents within the home than males and

experience greater difficulties with adjustment, as parents seek to protect them from a strange environment. Males, on the other hand, may encounter greater strife outside the home as a consequence of the greater freedom afforded them by their parents. This includes trouble with such institutions as the educational system and the police; they report difficulties with teachers, bullying, violence and racism. These gender variations are also nuanced by ethnicity. Thus, many Somali males complained of experiencing school violence, bullying and extortion while Filipino youth spoke about being severely beaten by Chinese youth gangs. Among the Korean male youth, a great deal of aggressive racism was articulated towards African Canadians. What these results appear to indicate is that both gender and cultural difference must be examined in understanding processes of settlement and integration across diverse groups of newcomer youth.

These findings, while suggestive, are not conclusive. It must be understood that the use of a focus group methodology provides a rich tapestry of themes, factors and areas that require further investigation. This study is no exception. By separately examining the needs and concerns of seven different male and female ethnic groups we have managed to provide a series of insights and hypotheses. These need to be taken up in additional, carefully planned research studies. Such studies would make use of triangulated research methodologies including in-depth interviews and surveys.

While the survey conducted by the Institute of Social Research at York University confirms that agencies have services and programs available to newcomer youth, exclusive focus on, or even specialization in, this client group is not the norm. At best, for slightly over one quarter of the agencies, newcomer youth make up merely 20 per cent of their newcomer clientele. Though the agencies surveyed fully recognize that these youth must overcome a variety of obstacles (e.g., lack of fluency in English, culture shock, and inter-generational conflict) in order to adapt to Canadian society and most have strategies in place for evaluating the response of newcomer youth to programs, they see serious barriers to effective service delivery. Among those mentioned were an insufficient number of programs, a lack of inter-agency coordination, inadequate funding, and the variability of needs by different cultural and racial groups. Both agencies and key informants agree that school-based programs are most important in that school

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is the place of greatest contact for newcomer youth in late adolescence. An examination of detailed recommendations by sector at the end of this report reveals that the greatest number of recommendations made by all sources relate to school-based programs (e.g., mentoring, peer tutoring, buddy systems, counselling and support services). It is our conviction that these recommendations need to be taken seriously, as a basis for further discussion and development. For this to happen, the major players --school boards, Ministry of Education and Training, service provider agencies offering services and programs to newcomer youth and OASIS-- need to convene to discuss these and other recommendations found in collaborating partners' reports. The objective, however, would not be simply to confer over recommendations but rather to design strategies and mechanisms (including inter-agency and inter-governmental coordination) that would enhance the delivery of "best practices" for adolescents in this age group, practices that respect the complex set of factors and themes identified in this report. And while the delivery of such service is clearly linked to the schools, it cannot end there. Given the late age of entry into Canada of so many youth, there is a vital need for service providers to link youth to the assistance that must be provided when they then enter the post-secondary sector or the workforce, lest they not make that transition successfully and fail to move on to full participation in and contribution to Canadian society.

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ENDNOTE

[1] A variety of agencies and individuals assisted the participants to adapt to life in Canada. These agencies and individuals included ethnic community organizations, recreation centres, schools, friends, relatives, guidance counsellors, teachers, religious organizations, and sports teams/clubs.

Family and Friends
Across all groups, youth and mothers reported friends and family as sources of tremendous support in their struggle to adjust to life in Canada. Many youth and mothers noted that extended family already settled in Canada played a critical role in their adjustment. Extended family, for example, assisted in finding them accommodation and employment, connected them to appropriate mainstream and community organizations, and provided all the necessary translation work for them in the early years in Canada.

Most of the youth identified friends they met at school as most helpful to them in adjusting. These school friends told them what to do in school and after school, what to watch on T.V., how to dress, and what subjects to choose at school.

Teachers/Guidance Counsellors
Several youth mentioned that they had received the most assistance when first coming to Canada from caring teachers at school. They stated that the teachers were "willing to go that extra mile for them" by assisting them with homework after school or by giving them moral support and valuable advice when they felt down and defeated. Teachers from their own ethnoracial background were pointed out by some youth as helpful in providing assistance with subjects, moral support, and translation. Some of the participants also received a lot of help from guidance counsellors at school who assisted them with the difficulties and challenges they encountered in Canada, in addition to their school related and personal problems. Several youth mentioned school principals as also being helpful.

Religious Institutions

Korean, Jamaican, Filipino and Portuguese mothers mentioned that they received the greatest help and comfort from their church. Their church also gave them an opportunity to meet and make friends with other people of similar backgrounds and offered a variety of programs including social events for adults and youth. The youth also identified their church as offering them assistance and support in their settlement process. The Jamaican group mentioned a youth program in their church, comprised of a support group, where they were able to talk about daily experiences and ways to deal with difficulties.

The Somali and Iranian mothers and youth discussed the religious meetings they attended and the spiritual and moral support they derived from these meetings; and a male participant in the Russian-Jewish group stated that their rabbi helped the family adjust to life in Canada.

Settlement Agencies, Community Centres and Organizations

Numerous settlement agencies and community centres, both ethnospecific-specific and mainstream, were cited by youth and mothers as providing assistance in a variety of areas. Listed below are the settlement agencies and community centres and organizations that were mentioned by name as being helpful:

- *Abrego House* - as an outstanding source of help with settlement.
- *ACE* - a job training centre.
- *AWARE Filipino Family Services* - provided orientation to newly reunited families by holding focus groups regarding various topics: a live-in care giver program; newcomers needs and concerns; adjustment of family members after many years of separation from mothers.
- *Canadian Council for Victims of Torture* - helps in terms of counselling and emotional support.
- *Culture Link* – Multi-ethnic agency that provides assistance to a variety of immigrant groups; the Iranian youth and mothers lauded the counsellor at Culture Link for organizing support groups for newcomer youth and mothers.
- *Dufferin Mall Youth Services* – offers services and programs to youth, such as job search, resume writing etc.
- *Ethiopian Association* - provides information on legal aid and finding a lawyer.
- *The First Portuguese Organization* - a settlement agency which also helps with translation.
- *Jamaican Canadian Association* (JCA) – offers a variety of activities and programs to newcomer youth and adults.
- *Jewish Community Centre* (JCC) – offers a variety of programs, and social, cultural and physical activities.

- *Jewish Immigration Aid Service* (JIAS) - the agency is particularly helpful in areas of resettlement and adjustment and deals with the needs and concerns of immigrants around mental health, education and employment.
- *Kababayan* – provides a variety of services including assistance with finding housing; emotional support; transitional housing; haven from abusive spouses; recreational activities for youth and adults etc.
- *Iranian Community Association of Ontario* - settlement support.
- *Iranian Women's Association of Ontario* – offers a variety of classes.
- *Midaynta* (Association of Somali Service Agencies) - assists in writing resumes, reference letters, and adjusting to life in Canada.
- *The Playground*- an agency that provides assistance in learning computer technology.
- *Red Door* - helps newcomer families to get settled, helps with finding housing and dealing with legal procedures; provides information on programs and services.
- *Regent Park Community Centre* - assistance with sports, employment search, and religious instruction; Homework Club.
- *Somali Immigrant Aid Organization* – provides community kitchens, teaches parents how to shop on a limited budget, and how to make nutritious foods. Has formed shopping clubs and community gardens.
- *Somali Women's Organization* - provides tutoring and extra help after school; also English classes for mothers.
- *The Toronto Entrepreneur* - an agency which assists youth in learning how to start their own business.
- *United Filipino Mothers* - established 10 years ago by a group of women before they were re-united with family members, to help with family separation and other issues.
- *YMCA* - help with creating resume and job hunting.

Specific helpful programs:

- *An unnamed family partnering program* - Canadian families who regularly help newcomers and support their integration into Canadian society; the participant was unaware of what this program was called or who established it for them, but he noted that it helped immensely.
- *Black Leadership Association Committee* (BLAC) - a program that operated out of a local school and organized talent shows about the Caribbean and Africa.
- *Changing Perspective* - Every three months, Police Recruitment Officers bring youth to the police college in London where they engage in discussions on how to make a difference in the way police view Black youth in the community.
- *Positive Peer Cultural Group* – organized by teachers; meetings with members of the community and the local schools to provided a place for members of the community to express concerns about how they felt about issues within the community and the school.

- *Somali Immigrant Aid Organization* - offered a nutrition program, part of the LINC classes, which has been quite successful.
- *Somali Immigrant Aid Organization* - a program funded by Heritage Canada whose mandate was to help students and their families integrate into the Canadian educational system; this program was quite successful but the funding for it was cut.
- *Somali Refugee Association* - recruits volunteers from high schools and universities to help with after-school programs and homework clubs.

[2] Recommendations were found in the reports from all four types of sources: the Review of the Literature, the Report on the Key Informants, the Report on Service Providers, and the Focus Groups with Youth (male and female groups) and Mothers. What follows is a synthesis of these recommendations, organized first by the five major sectors the research set out to address, and then by other types of recommendations that emerged.

Education

X   School_based programs are the most important, since school is the place of greatest contact. Repeatedly requested are counselling and supports services, welcoming and reception centres, mentoring and peer tutoring programs to prevent isolation and dropping out, and assessment services to determine appropriate school placement.

X   Schools should actively educate to promote anti_discrimination and the break_down of racist stereotypes. (Newcomer youth want assistance in order to understand the culture to which they are integrating themselves, and also need for this culture to understand them__not just with tolerance but with a real open_mindedness by community members. These young people stated a strong need to live without prejudice or discrimination in any form, whether based on race, culture, religion or gender.)

X   ESL classes need to be of a high quality to integrate students into their subject areas at the level of sophistication they need for academic work at their level, they should welcome students whose English represents another dialect, and language level should be distinguished from mastery of other subjects in another language; placement should be determined by subject mastery, with language training provided to support that level.

X   The government should provide education for immigrants regarding the available resources in Canada.

X   The government needs a fair and efficient system to evaluate and recognize foreign degrees and work experience at all levels.

X   Similarly, schools need more accurate ways of determining where a student should be placed in terms of grade and levels of study.

X   Greater partnerships must be formed between community organizations and schools, in which community educators and other members would be invited into the schools to talk with youth.

X   Schools need to make a dedicated effort to link parents with the work of the school, especially with what their children are doing in school; every school should have a place

where family members are genuinely welcomed and assisted to fit in; just as newcomer youth need to be taught about Canadian culture and Canadian youth, so do their parents, which will ease the school's task then of assisting their children's integration.

X Designated prayer areas are needed for Muslim students in schools.

X Services provided in schools, such as the services of guidance counsellors and others, should be culturally sensitive and insightful as to the lived experiences of immigrant and refugee youth and their families.

X Immigrant students should be able to find themselves both in what they are taught (multicultural curriculum) and by whom (teachers representative of all cultures and genders). To prevent further isolation of the newcomers, school boards should hire qualified immigrant teachers who will not only make newcomer students feel more a part of the school, but would also teach those born in Canada about interacting with newcomers. (This is particularly important in terms of shaping the expectations of Canadian teachers for their new students.)

X Since youth need to be part of the community in which they live and the school serves as the gatekeeper to the society for them, it should provide genuine opportunities to make friends and enjoy social interaction, whether through sports or other appropriate activities. This may be a way for schools to address the need newcomer youths have for role models who look like them, understand them and (literally) where they are coming from, as well as speak the same language.

X Policies of zero tolerance for violence should be established and implemented at all schools. (Across groups, more males suggested initiatives for zero tolerance of violence at school than females and mothers did; some males recommended harsher sentences to be handed out to young offenders.)

X Parents need to know that schools and schoolyards are safe, lest they curtail their children's hours of socializing, causing further isolation and subsequent resentment of the new country.

X After_school programs should be geared towards including students of all cultures, while remaining sensitive to the needs of newcomers; there should, for example, be many opportunities for pursuing sports and activities found across the world.

X Mentoring programs or buddy programs are needed, in which already_integrated (or native to Canada) youth would not only teach the newcomers about the school and its education system, but also help them understand Canadian (youth) culture.

X Creating homework clubs would not only benefit those students whose parents cannot help them with assignments (because of a lack of English or education), but also those students who are beginning to slack off because of a perceived less_strict academic atmosphere in Canadian schools; these clubs would also ease the embarrassment of parents who are unable to help their children with schoolwork, and preserve family harmony.

X   Cross-cultural education should be provided for all members of the school community who will come in contact with newcomer youth and their parents, not just for teachers.

X   There should be an active recruitment of immigrant parents to the P/TA and school council; as focus group subjects pointed out, the children of P/TA members get better treatment from the teachers!

Social Services

X   Citizenship and Immigration Canada should develop a comprehensive settlement package of information about the agencies and organization that serve the community, written in a variety of languages.

X   Courses should be taught to all newcomers when they arrive, and in their own language; they should include information on the rights of newcomers.

X   Free vacation camps and retreats for youths of all cultures should be set up to facilitate socializing between newcomers and non_newcomers, possibly or especially those who are the "buddies" or "mentors" during the school year.

X   Programs should be characterized by individualized attention, empathetic and qualified staff, appropriate language of service delivery and involving youth in program planning and delivery.

X   Recreation is an important part of integrating into Canada; opportunities to play soccer in Canada, for example, should be expanded.

X   Youth and their families need access to affordable housing, health care and medicine, as well as recreational activities and schooling, and this access should be provided in a safe environment.

X   Family counselling programs for parents and their children need to be set up, as this time of settlement is difficult for the whole family. Counsellors are needed to act as mediators among youths, parents and teachers, as intergenerational issues loom large in the minds of these youth, and they feel keenly the absence of services here. Parental involvement and client evaluation are important for family conflict resolution programs.

X   Services are needed to provide proper contacts for good, reliable referrals to the variety of types of services youth may need.

X   Every community should have drop-in centres for youth, at which there should be Programs that actively seek feedback from clients, have good internal organization, a culturally_sensitive staff, good supervision, programs designed to reduce isolation.

X   Services are needed to facilitate communication and understanding between the police and newcomers (of all ages, but especially youth).

X   Police need considerable education and training around understanding diversity and working with newcomers or any groups different from themselves.

Employment

X   Many male youth and some females requested greater assistance to attain meaningful employment; like other young Canadians, they need jobs they can thrive in, employers who teach them skills, and wages that are fair.

X   Services need to compensate for the fact that employment opportunities are more difficult for males to find than females.

X   Since the school system is not the primary job preparation instrument of Canadian society, there is a great need for job training programs for youth, especially non-exploitative paid apprenticeships, co-operative educational placements, etc.

X   Services should reflect the fact that employment for newcomer youth is often to support the family financially, as opposed to what their peers might be doing with their money.

X   There should be a program to assist employers to recognize work experience from a newcomer's native land and to recognize foreign credentials.

X   Services are needed for employers of newcomer youth to acquire insight and sensitivity to their needs.

X   Goal_oriented employment and employment-linked language services are needed.

Health

C   Lack of health services include affordable medicine (i.e., prescription and non-prescription drugs), and well-designed, culturally knowledgeable programs aimed at health issues affecting youth (anti_smoking campaigns, drug awareness, alcohol abuse, etc.).

X   The location of youth-oriented health services in schools and local community centres is important for the delivery of planned parenthood and community health programs, as well as to disseminate information targeted particularly to youth.

Mental Health

X   Government must address the normal need of youth to be with their families, which is impeded by immigration_linked separation, and delays in family re_unification; this is especially important as not only have they become separated from their parents, they are missing their friends and, quite possibly, an entirely different lifestyle.

X   Similarly, there is a need for better matching by government between the jobs that immigrants are encouraged to come to Canada for and those same immigrants upon arrival, to prevent the common instances of parents having to work so many jobs over such long hours that their moral support of their children is severely limited.

X   Youth need access to free counselling from counsellors who are both genuinely sensitive to and fully aware of their situation, including their culture, and also wholly committed to confidentiality; youth are not only struggling with their own issues but often they bear the weight of their parents' experiences and frustrations with integration.

X   Male youth in particular need genuine access to counsellors who reach out to them; since males are (more often than not) taught to be "tough", they have a more difficult time integrating than females who feel freer to talk about their emotions.

X   Services need to address emotionally_stressful factors for both children and their parents that arise out of the fact that young newcomers are often ashamed that their parents don't speak English; while at the same time, power roles are reversed as parents become dependent on children to translate.

Other Areas for Recommendations

X   There should be a program providing a realistic portrayal of job opportunities in Canada so that potential immigrants "know what they are getting into."

X   Greater training and education is needed in the media, as newcomer youths feel either underrepresented in the media, or discriminated against by misrepresentation.