Recommendations for the Delivery of ISAP Services to Mandarin Speaking Newcomers from Mainland China

Final Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Mandarin speaking newcomers noted in this report are defined as Chinese immigrants who immigrate to Canada from the Peoples’ Republic of China (China hereafter), excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan, and have been living in Canada less than five years.

Mandarin speaking newcomers have been one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in Canada especially in the past decade. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Landed Immigrants Data System, 2001), more than 370,000 Chinese immigrants from China landed in Canada from 1980 to 2001. The total population of immigrants from China exceeded that of Hong Kong dramatically, and China was ranked first among top ten immigration source countries in Canada from 1998 to 2002 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1999, 2002).

The significance of Mandarin speaking newcomers from China has increased due to a dramatic rise in their population in Canada. It is also associated with the distinct social and cultural context in their country of origin, and the human, social and cultural capital they bring with them, including their Mandarin mother tongue. Although sharing similar culture of origin, Mandarin immigrants are somewhat distinct from the well-established Cantonese-speaking community, as well as those of Chinese immigrants coming from countries and regions outside China (George, Tsang, Man & Da, 2000).

Contracted by Ontario Settlement Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, RealWorld Systems has recently completed surveys on the needs/barriers of Mandarin speaking newcomers in Ontario. The data was compiled from interviews with both Mandarin speaking newcomers and service providers. CERIS was contracted to further address the issues faced by Mandarin speaking newcomers from Mainland China through an in-depth data/literature review.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

The objectives of this report are twofold. First is to review existing literature related to Mandarin speaking newcomers, focusing on their settlement barriers and needs, as well as models (if any)
of services offered. Second, and more importantly, is to make recommendations based on the
literature review to improve the effectiveness of current settlement programs in assisting
newcomers socially, economically and culturally to integrate into Canadian society. Specifically,
the report is intended to:

- identify the distinct segments of Mandarin speaking newcomers and major needs and barriers
  they face in the process of settlement and integration into Canadian society;
- make recommendations on how to improve the existing federally funded ISAP, LINC and
  HOST services in a concrete and practical manner to meet the needs of Mandarin speaking
  newcomers and facilitate the process of settlement towards integration into Canadian society;
- make recommendations for the delivery of settlement services also applicable to meeting the
  needs of new immigrants from other cultural contexts;
- provide a bibliography on the studies of Chinese immigrants which can be used as a source
  document for future studies.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on secondary research. Specific data gathered has been grouped into
four categories: demographic data; results of the Ontario Region Survey of ISAP agencies
serving Mandarin speaking newcomers; a review of literature relating to the immigration of
Mandarin speaking Chinese from Mainland China; website resources ranging from information
about Mandarin speaking newcomers to settlement resources currently available to this group.

1. Demographic Data
Data for the population and demographic profile of Mainland Chinese arriving in Canada was
retained through Census data; Landed Immigrants Data System (LIDS); and the GEOIDE
project.

2. Results of the Ontario Region Survey of ISAP agencies serving Mandarin speaking
   newcomers
Information compiled from the survey can be found in appendix (Appendix A1 and A2)
3. Review of Literature

The literature review for the present report included all CIC funded studies on this immigrant group. In addition, other literature pertaining to the purposes of this report was also reviewed and categorized into four distinct segments.

- **Settlement needs/services of Mandarin speaking Chinese from mainland China in Canada**
  These studies embodied research specifically related to the settlement concerns of Mandarin speaking newcomers in Canada. Initial research focused primarily on studies done within the boundaries of the Greater Toronto Area, however research on this specific immigrant group in the area was limited. Therefore the scope of this research category was broadened to include the rest of Canada. In total ten studies were reviewed in this category.

- **Chinese focused settlement needs/services literature in Canada**
  The majority of literature is focused on the Chinese as one homogenous group; the identification of Mainland Chinese from other Chinese (i.e. Taiwanese, Hong Kongese) is rarely found in literature. Henceforth, studies relating to general settlement concerns of Chinese in Canada were also reviewed, with particular interest in differentiation found in research between Mainland Chinese and other popular regions of origin (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam). A total of eighteen pieces of literature were reviewed in this category.

- **General settlement needs/services for immigrants and models of service delivery in Canada**
  Literature of general settlement needs and services of other ethnic groups both within the GTA and in other provinces were reviewed, along with material detailing various other service delivery models utilized by other regions in Canada. The number of literature/studies reviewed in this category was twenty-three.

- **General settlement needs/services for immigrants and models of service delivery in the U.S., New Zealand, and Australia**
Information was also gathered regarding immigrant needs and services in other countries which have faced similar immigrant settlement concerns. Nine literature/studies were reviewed in this category.

In total sixty studies or pieces of literature have been reviewed for this report; of which fifty were primary studies and seven were secondary studies. Primary studies consisted of quantitative and qualitative analyses and field work studies. Secondary studies mainly consisted of literature reviews and government issued policy documents. For the purposes of this report, summary points from each study have been compiled into four tables corresponding to the aforementioned categories of the literature review (Appendix B, C, D, E).

4. *Website Resources*

Resources found online were used in this study mainly for the purposes of obtaining information regarding settlement services that could be accessed by newcomer Mandarin speaking Chinese during their pre-migration and settlement phases. In particular, common websites geared toward providing settlement services to Mandarin speaking newcomers from Mainland China were thoroughly examined to understand the needs of this community and the resources currently available to them. Website resources were additionally used for general reference in determining general services provided by CIC and ISAP. A complete listing of all web resources used, including CIC funded sources can be found in Appendix F.

4. **BACKGROUND OF MANDARIN SPEAKING NEWCOMERS**

The massive exodus of Chinese from the People’s Republic China (mainland China hereafter) observed in the past two decades has echoed the fundamental shift in immigration policy in major immigration countries like Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. The outflows of Chinese have also resulted from social, political and economic changes in modern China since the end of 1970s, the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Open Door policy, economic reform and four modernization campaigns (Da, 2003a, b; George et al., 2000; Zong, 2004; Liu, 1997, 1996; Tian, 1999; Wang & Lo, 2004; Zhang, 1995).
China is a vast country consisting of 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 2 special administrative regions, and 56 nationalities. An overwhelming majority of Chinese people belong to Han nationality. Each province and region has its own dialect, but Mandarin (*pu tonghua*) is an official language that is learned in all educational institutions.

Variations in social and cultural customs, and economic status among different provinces and regions in China are apparent between the well-developed, affluent southeastern and coastal regions and underdeveloped inland regions and remote areas. This diversity influences people’s behaviours and values in different ways (Chin, Williams, & Mayers, 1998).

Historically, China is one of the few countries that has never been fully colonized. Furthermore, there was a period of time before the Open Door policy was introduced at the end of the 1970s in which western influences were purposely resisted, and English learning was limited and de-emphasized. Religious practices were also limited and constrained but the situation has since improved to some extent.

Another distinct imperative, which must be considered, is that of the role of Chinese culture, specifically Confucianism. It fundamentally differs from the general orientation of the western culture. Yet Confucian practices in modern China have been frequently shaped by the central ideology of the Chinese government and socio-economic status in China. It tends to be more complex than that of Chinese communities outside China. Cultural values of collectiveness, courtesy, and the devaluation of individual interests may very well be hindering the ways in which Mandarin speaking newcomers seek help and socialize with mainstream Canadians as well as other ethnic groups.

One of the distinct segments influencing the settlement experiences of Mandarin speaking newcomers lies in the social context of the home country. The socio-political system in China, such as the social welfare system, family policy, gender ideology, marriage law, education system, employment, and norms as well as customs differ from that of Canada in many fundamental ways. The one child policy, for example, introduced in 1979 is unique and controversial, and has had long-lasting social and psychological consequences for Chinese
family life (Da, 2001). Social services are also quite different from that of Canada in terms of the types of services and the ways in which services are delivered.

Women’s participation in the work force since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China has been promoted and enforced through various social policies. The percentage of women in the work force in China is about 90%, which is much higher than that of Canada, the United States and Australia, which are about 67%. Child care centers usually provide day-long care to meet the needs of two-earner families, and the fees for child care are affordable. It is therefore common practice for women to have children and to re-enter the work force and be fully supported by government policy and childcare services (Da, 2003a, b; Da, 2004).

Mandarin speaking newcomers in general tend to be educated and most, if not all, were professionals prior to immigration. This reflects current immigration policy in Canada. They are also most likely from an urban background, as urban Chinese have advantages in accessing various information and incentive policies introduced by the Chinese government to facilitate economic development compared to residents living in rural areas (George et al., 2000).

Source regions in China in this group are diversified when compared to those that came to Canada during the 19th century. A study done by George et al. (2000) on Needs Assessment of Mandarin Speaking Newcomers in Toronto showed that the respondents came from 16 provinces across China. Social and cultural variations by regions in the group are apparent. However, the emphasis on the diversity of Mandarin speaking newcomers to Ontario is not to suggest separate linguistically and culturally segmented services or programs to deny common challenges all immigrants face in settling in Canada. Rather, it offers a background for a better understanding of this group of newcomers so as to better provide culturally sensitive services to them.

5. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF MANDARIN SPEAKING NEWCOMERS

This section first presents a set of tables showing the total number of mainland Chinese immigrants who arrived in Toronto in the past 5 to 6 years, as well as their skill levels, age,
marital status and language ability. All of the data were extracted from Canada Landed Immigrants Data System.

Secondly, it presents a set of maps which show the distribution of mainland Chinese immigrants in CMA and also by age groups. The data were extracted from the 2001 census.

Table 1. Mainland Chinese Immigrants by Top Three Census Metropolitan Area, 1997-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>1,102</td>
<td>1,206</td>
<td>1,715</td>
<td>2,677</td>
<td>3,556</td>
<td>2,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>8,367</td>
<td>8,447</td>
<td>13,701</td>
<td>18,544</td>
<td>21,476</td>
<td>17,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>4,487</td>
<td>5,342</td>
<td>8,077</td>
<td>9,479</td>
<td>9,535</td>
<td>7,646</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2. Year of Landing by Sex, 1997-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>11628</td>
<td>13119</td>
<td>24747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>10635</td>
<td>12173</td>
<td>22808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>14700</td>
<td>16372</td>
<td>31072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>18977</td>
<td>19879</td>
<td>38856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>20454</td>
<td>21852</td>
<td>42306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Mainland Chinese immigrants by skill level, 1997-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Occupations</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>1348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Degree-Bachelors, Masters, or Doctorate</td>
<td>6318</td>
<td>5844</td>
<td>9685</td>
<td>12785</td>
<td>13405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College or Technical Institute (Two Years)</td>
<td>2237</td>
<td>2076</td>
<td>1731</td>
<td>1231</td>
<td>943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to Four Years of Secondary Education</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 2 Years of Secondary Education &amp; On-job Training</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14646</td>
<td>13868</td>
<td>18738</td>
<td>23655</td>
<td>26412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Mainland Chinese immigrants by age grouping, 1997-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Grouping</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>3970</td>
<td>4275</td>
<td>5885</td>
<td>7302</td>
<td>8104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>1492</td>
<td>1499</td>
<td>1699</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2584</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5. Mainland Chinese immigrants by family status, 1997-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Applicant</td>
<td>13865</td>
<td>13044</td>
<td>16578</td>
<td>19811</td>
<td>21394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>6738</td>
<td>5700</td>
<td>8599</td>
<td>11423</td>
<td>12151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent of Principal Applicant</td>
<td>3987</td>
<td>3934</td>
<td>5699</td>
<td>7377</td>
<td>8464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J88 Dependant</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24748</td>
<td>22810</td>
<td>31072</td>
<td>38858</td>
<td>42307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Mainland Chinese immigrants by marital status, 1997-2001

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>7309</td>
<td>7759</td>
<td>9789</td>
<td>12308</td>
<td>13723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>16189</td>
<td>14187</td>
<td>20455</td>
<td>25550</td>
<td>27605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Law</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24747</td>
<td>22810</td>
<td>31071</td>
<td>38833</td>
<td>42299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Mainland Chinese immigrants by Canadian language ability, 1997-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>10552</td>
<td>9103</td>
<td>13576</td>
<td>11754</td>
<td>8939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>14004</td>
<td>13527</td>
<td>17287</td>
<td>26950</td>
<td>33208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24748</td>
<td>22810</td>
<td>31072</td>
<td>38858</td>
<td>42307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 1 shows, Chinese immigrants from China tend to select Toronto as their settlement destination. The total number of female mainland Chinese outnumbered that of males in the past five years (Table 2). Family reunion is part of the explanation for this. Educational level and skill level among mainland Chinese immigrants are higher (See Table 3), and half of the population was aged 25 to 44 on arrival (Table 4). This reflects the current merit point immigration policy which is based on education and skills. Regarding marital status, more than
half of the population was married upon arrival (Table 5, 6). This implies that family life may become more complicated in the process of settlement.

Regarding the distribution of Chinese from mainland China, a majority of the mainland Chinese immigrants are now living in the northeastern surrounding regions, especially Scarborough, York and Markham (See Map 1 on page 13). When we look at the distribution of mainland Chinese population by age groups, 0-19 and 20-44 groups are likely to live in the York and Scarborough regions, and a small proportion of the population lives in downtown Toronto. The 65+ age group is overwhelmingly concentrated in the northeast areas (See Maps 2-4 on pages 14 - 16).

6. MAJOR NEEDS AND BARRIERS

The results of the literature review on needs and barriers among Mandarin speaking newcomers are summarized in the following.

Needs

- **Practical and spoken language skills**
  Language inefficiency is identified as one of the major barriers experienced by Mandarin speaking newcomers in Canada (George et al., 2000; Powers & Kerr, 2004). Prior to arriving in Canada, most Mandarin speaking newcomers passed English examinations; however, this does not guarantee fluency in spoken language. Ability to speak fluent English is of utmost importance for access to labour market. English skills are also of great importance in the everyday activities of this immigrant group, and serve to hinder those who possess weak skills (i.e. accessing health care, education of their children) (Leung 2000; Yuan, Permaul-Woods, Barnsley and Cockerill 1998)

- **Unemployment or underemployed**
  Employment is critical, and determines the whole process of settlement. Unemployment is a major source of family conflicts, marital crises, and mental health problems (George et al., 2000). Most often Mandarin speaking newcomers are forced to take on jobs, which are far below their level of expertise. In some cases, highly trained professionals become tied down
Map 1: Distribution of Chinese from Mainland China Immigrated Between 1997 & 2001

Number of Immigrants
(# of tracts)

- 250 - 730: 50
- 75 - 249: 126
- 10 - 74: 350
- 0 - 9: 411

Number of Immigrants
(# of tracts)

- 50 - 155: 61
- 20 - 49: 110
- 10 - 19: 183
- 0 - 9: 583
Map 3: Distribution of Chinese from Mainland China Immigrated Between 1997 & 2001, Age 20-64

Number of Immigrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Immigrants</th>
<th>(# of tracts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>190 - 600</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 189</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 59</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 9</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map 4: Distribution of Chinese from Mainland China Immigrated Between 1997 & 2001, Age 65+

Number of Immigrants
(# of tracts)

- 35 - 105
- 15 - 34
- 10 - 14
- 0 - 9

- 8
- 52
- 89
- 788
• **Job search skills and connections with professional associations**

Mandarin newcomers require services that develop skills in interviewing, information on how to gain Canadian work experience, and more information geared toward particular professionals. This newcomer group requires services more applicable to professionals (i.e. professional accreditation seminars, assistance in obtaining internships). There must be a move to provide services beyond basic resume writing and job search strategies (Powers & Kerr, 2004; Preston, 2001).

• **Lack of knowledge about Canadian culture, social system and settlement services**

This refers to a lack of information about Canadian culture, customs, social system and settlement services prior to and after immigration. Even after arrival most information about settlement services is obtained from friends or relatives rather than social service agencies (Liu 1997; George et al., 2000; Kerr 2004; Teo 2003; Leung 2000). Many newcomers do not know of community settlement services that are available to them, which may explain an under usage of services (George et al., 2000; Powers & Kerr, 2004).

• **Child care needs**

Studies of Mandarin speaking newcomers point out the need for affordable and appropriate child care services for this group of newcomers. The current child care services are not only too expensive, but they also do not meet the needs of working mothers (Preston 2001; Leung 2000; Report of Chinatown Restaurant Workers Needs Assessment, 1998). The need for child care services has resulted in sending children back to China to be cared for by grandparents and relatives, or sponsoring grandparents from China to Canada for the purpose of assisting with child care (George et al., 2000). The phenomenon of sending children back to the home country for care or asking grandparents to come over for child care assistance was also observed among this group in the Australian context (Da, 2003a, b). The phenomenon of astronaut families which has been found among Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan has also been witnessed among immigrants from China (Da, 2001; George et al., 2000; Irving et al., 2000).
• **Access to affordable housing**

The need for affordable housing is ranked high among the needs of this group (Powers, & Kerr, 2004). Newcomer families face great difficulties in accessing affordable housing (George et al. 2000). One of the reasons is because they lack a credit/financial history (See Appendix A on Ontario Region Survey of ISAP agencies serving Mandarin speaking newcomers, 2004). Therefore securing employment is critical. If they do not have a job, they are ineligible apply to for a credit card and are therefore unable to develop a credit history. This is a vicious cycle.

• **Family supports**

Family life is vulnerable among Mandarin speaking newcomers. Studies have highlighted family conflicts among different members of the family due to settlement stress. There is a need for counseling services to move beyond general settlement counseling to include services that address the more complex stressors involved in the settlement of newcomers, i.e. marriage counseling, counseling for elderly and adolescents (Irving et al., 2000). Leung (2000) provides evidence from an agency that has introduced a program “Crisis Intervention and Individual support” for newcomers to cope with depression, spousal abuse, alcoholism etc.

• **Services for the elderly**

Elderly immigrants face greater difficulties after immigration. They are the most vulnerable age group in terms of financial constraints, language barrier and social network support. (George et al., 2000; Leung & McDonald, 2001).

• **Children/Adolescent supports**

Children and adolescents of Mandarin newcomers encounter great challenges upon their arrival to Canada (Irving et al., 1998). Most times they are unwilling participants in the migration process, and require specialized services to integrate them into mainstream society. Problems found in this sub-group have included difficulties in school, lack of social networks, difficulty integrating into mainstream Canadian society, and difficulties adapting
to familial changes at home, i.e. satellite families typically result in sons taking on greater
more “adult like” behaviours and responsibilities (Irving et al., 2000).

- **Volunteer Opportunities**
  It appears that current volunteer opportunities do not meet the demands of Mandarin
  speaking newcomers from Mainland China seeking value-added volunteer opportunities.
  Mandarin newcomers from Mainland China believe strongly in volunteer opportunities to
  learn and contribute to Canadian culture and to obtain quality work experience (Powers &
  Kerr, 2004).

**Barriers**

- **Unrecognized educational qualification and working experiences**
  Unrecognized educational qualifications and work experience is the major obstacle many
  Mandarin speaking newcomers and immigrants from other countries face after arrival in
  Canada (George et al., 2000; Zong, 2004; Liu, 1997; Powers and Kerr, 2004; Tian, 1999).
  The consequence of unemployment status or taking jobs under their qualifications has a
  significant impact on the stability of their family life and family relations in the group.

  Barriers Mandarin speaking newcomers face also came from some employers who are
  reluctant to hire highly educated immigrants. Some employers even take advantage of new
  immigrants by making them work for low wages or firing them without just cause (George et
  al., 2000, p. 23). The phenomenon of “returning back to home country” after being landed in
  Canada has not been documented, but is the focus of an on-going project at the Research on
  Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis (RIIM) in Vancouver. There is currently a
  survey of Mandarin speaking immigrants from China which examines factors contributing to
  their decision making to “stay” or “leave” Canada (see website:
  http://riim.metropolis.net/frameset_e.html).

- **Language barriers**
  The existing literature on Mandarin speaking newcomers in Canada and abroad highlights the
  lack of English skills among them. It is viewed as the first and foremost barrier they face in
accessing services and integrating into the host society (George et al., 2000; Gu, 2000; Kerr & Simard, 2003; Leung, 2000; Power & Kerr, 2004).

There is also an existing dialect barrier between Cantonese speaking settlement service providers and Mandarin newcomers from Mainland China; which prevents access by these newcomers to services (George et al., 2001; Leung, 2000).

Current LINC programs offer English classes for newcomers, but spaces are limited and there is a waiting list for newcomers to enroll into the class (Ontario Region Survey of ISAP, 2004). In addition, the level of language training is low in comparison to the higher needs of professional immigrants (George et al., 2000; Powers & Kerr 2004; Preston, 2001).

- Social and cultural barriers in understanding Canadian social system and services
  There are social and cultural barriers to Mandarin speaking newcomers’ integration into Canadian society because of a drastically different culture of origin and socio-political system. They are likely to experience cultural shock, and need more time to re-adjust and adapt to a new social setting. They are also likely to have higher expectations of what government can do for them, and higher expectations of their life after immigration because of a limited knowledge about Canadian social, culture and economic systems.

Empirical studies found that culturally many Mandarin speaking newcomers are likely to seek advice and assistance through social networks of friends, relatives and acquaintances rather than social services, because they believe friendship networks are easiest and most reliable (Liu, 1997). The cultural behaviour can be seen as positive of getting what they need after arrival. But it can also be a barrier in accessing services that their relatives or friends may not know.

The cultural barriers Mandarin speaking newcomers face are also related to the differences in law and legislation between home country and host country. For example, it is common and acceptable for parents to leave their children under 12 years old alone at home temporarily or longer. However this practice is against Canadian law.
• **Transportation accessibility or lack thereof**
Transportation has been mentioned as a major problem to all groups within this newcomer group. Difficulties mentioned have included long waits for driver’s licenses, high insurance costs, and accessibility to settlement services by public transportation (Powers & Kerr, 2004). Settlement services were not always found to be conveniently located, and at times were inaccessible to newcomers without cars or driver’s licenses or were not T.T.C. accessible. This was particularly prevalent in cases of elderly people seeking assistance. A study on Evaluation of Settlement Service Programs for Newcomer in Ontario by Wang and Truelove (2003) shows a discrepancy in settlement service agencies and newcomers settling in suburbia.

• **Deficiency in flow of information from settlement providers to Mandarin speaking newcomers**
Newcomers highlights the lack of a coherent referral path from the initial meeting with settlement providers to various services. In some instances newcomers are being referred to irrelevant services (Leung 2000). In addition, newcomers have complained of settlement providers being insensitive to their needs and lacking applicable information specific to their settlement concerns or proper referral where they can find assistance, i.e. referral or information regarding professional accreditation or general everyday concerns such as investments or home buying (Powers & Kerr, 2004).

Overall, the needs and barriers Mandarin speaking newcomers face in the process of settlement in Canada are not greatly distinct from that of other recent immigrants groups (George & Mwarigha, 1998; George, 2002; Kerr & Simard, 2003). Some of the needs are basic and applied to all immigrants. Yet some of the barriers identified among Mandarin speaking newcomers are culturally specific, and have an association with social and cultural context in the home country, such as the great differences in social system, policy, and cultural values. All of these hinder their access to information and services, as well as to the Canadian labour market.
7. RECOMMENDED MODEL OF DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO MANDARIN SPEAKING NEWCOMERS

7.1 Features of Services

Based on the literature reviews of existing studies on this particular Chinese immigrant groups, we propose a model of services with the following features:

- **Culturally specific:**
The culturally specific approach suggests that settlement services and programs need to take into account cultural differences among different immigrant groups. It implies that settlement workers need to be culturally and linguistically sensitive to the needs of immigrant newcomers.

- **Relevant and Targeted:**
Immigrants at different age groups and different occupations have different needs in the process of settlement. There is evidence to show that settlement services, for example, are not profession-specific to meet needs of highly educated immigrants. Community based agencies have limited connection with professional associations, and therefore face greater challenges in providing appropriate services and resources to the highly educated professional newcomers. Settlement services should also be designed to target different age groups of immigrants, such as children, youth, adults, seniors, men and women as well as lower skilled immigrants and highly educated immigrants.

- **Coordinated:** Two levels of coordination are needed.

  **At the inter-governmental level:** Settlement issues new immigrants face cannot be solved solely by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). CIC should set up consultation tables with relevant governmental departments, such as Health, Education, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. For example, HRSDC may be able to collaborate with CIC to provide more occupation specific information and seminars or counseling services to the professionally trained Mandarin
speaking newcomers to help them gain access the labour market. Federal-provincial coordination of services to newcomers could be enhanced. Collaboration between settlement services and CMHC should also be explored, as housing is a major problem that immigrants face, which has been documented by various research projects (George et al., 2000).

At the settlement program level: Currently it seems that there is no systematic and substantial coordination between or among settlement programs such as ISAP (SWIS, NIC, JSW, SETTLEMENT.ORG), LINC, HOST, and NSP (provincial). All settlement programs should “talk to each other” in relation to Mandarin newcomer needs and services. Moreover, the quality of information and referrals provided during the newcomers’ initial contacts with each of the programs leaves much room for improvement. Basic settlement information could be provided in a “one-stop” format as George and Mwarigha (1999) suggested in their report on Consultation on Settlement Programming for African Newcomers. Literature on immigrant settlement highlights the importance of developing and expanding networks of relationships (social capital) for newcomers. Therefore, connecting newcomers to other resources should be particularly emphasized in settlement programs.

- **Follow up based:**
  Current services are basically one-time in nature, and there is no system to keep track of and follow-up on the Mandarin speaking newcomers who enter the settlement service system. It is desirable to create common databases for all ISAP funded agencies, and to have audits of newcomer cases (at least making one phone call) to ensure effective outcomes for Mandarin speaking newcomers.

- **Flexible:**
  Current ISAP and LINC settlement services and programs mainly provide services to immigrants who have been living in Canada for less than three years. It is assumed that after their first three years of residency in Canada, newcomers will apply for Canadian citizenship. If they are still in need of settlement services, they can then go to NSP services for assistance. Yet findings from the survey of ISAP agencies show that many immigrants still face great difficulties in integrating socially and economically into the mainstream society.
after three years. Immigrant women, for example, who spend their first few years in Canada
taking care of young children may not able to access settlement services. Secondary migrants
who moved from one place to another after a couple of years may still have various needs.
These examples show that the policy may have prevented many, who are in desperate need,
from accessing services. Settlement services at this point need to be flexible with the criteria
according to the situation of immigrants.

7.2 A Model of Settlement Services

Pre-immigration

The CIC Website is a major source for potential immigrants to gain information about Canada.
At this stage, friendly, accessible and comprehensive website information in Chinese and English
will help the potential immigrants to gain some basic knowledge about Canadian culture, social
system and services, weather, landscape and customs. The CIC website should also include a
prominent and direct link to the settlement.org website for easy access by newcomer Mainland
Chinese.

CIC should focus on the website as a main source of settlement services information for
newcomers. Initiatives therefore should be taken to monitor current usage of the website. In
addition to receiving feedback from users, possibly through online surveys, improvement should
be made to CIC website based on feedback and usage figures.

On the website, emphasize the importance of adequate language skills, especially spoken
language not just TOFEL. This is especially important for Mainland Chinese immigrants as
noted in the beginning of this section. See more on “Virtual Agency” on page 33.
Upon Arrival at the Airport/Port Entry

A basic services guide sheet in Chinese\(^1\) for those who intend to settle in Ontario should be available in Vancouver – the port of entry where most Chinese newcomers from China will go through immigration customs and have interaction with immigration officers. An information package in Chinese should be available at the airport in Toronto. The current information packages provided by Immigration Reception and Information Services (IRIS) need to be updated and made more specific to the needs of Mandarin speaking newcomers.

The information package needs to include a brochure with comprehensive information in a more specific and straightforward manner. The brochure will include information on the main settlement services to meet the basic needs of newcomers like the federally funded ISAP (SWIS, NIC, JSW, SETTLEMENT.ORG), HOST, and LINC and provincial NSP, and the CIC website for settlement services. It will also include names of major Chinese newspapers, radio programs designed for Mandarin speaking newcomers, and TV channels in Mandarin language. In addition, important websites related to settlement services and basic information as well as Mainland Chinese specific websites should also be included in the brochure, such as Chinese Information Centre (CIC), the Chinese Professional Association of Canada (CPAC), the Centre for Information and Community Services (CICS), and the 211 hotline in Toronto.

The brochure will also provide a list of “DOs” and “DON’Ts” which draw lessons and experiences from those immigrants who came earlier. Examples of this may include:

- Paying for services they are unsure of, i.e. having to pay money to get their foreign credentials assessed, when they should go to a governing body of their occupation first to find out what they need and then decide what appropriate steps they should take first.

Or,

- Accepting employment without researching into their basic rights as a worker.
- Buying/renting houses without comparing prices.

\(^1\) Chinese cited here means the written language. There are many different types of local dialects, apart from Mandarin (also called pu tong hua), but there is only one type of written language (simplified and traditional).
Overall, the information package needs to be clear, short and concise, to ensure immigrants will keep and refer to their initial package when they are in search of initial settlement services.

Currently there are a variety of booklets and flyers about the settlement services in Mandarin provided by agencies like the Centre for Information and Community Services (CICS), the Chinese Professional Association of Canada (CPAC), and Woodgreen Community Centre. But the information may not be accessible in public places, or may not be widely known by other agencies and organizations.

**Settlement Services – Three Components**

Please see the pictorial diagram of a “Three-component” service delivery model on the page 28.

The settlement workers in the Service Provider Organizations need to have knowledge in a wide range of immigrant settlement services; beyond basic referral services, and include information regarding budgeting, seeking professional employment and accreditation. All settlement programs should collaborate and share information in relation to Mandarin newcomer needs and services, and when possible connect Mandarin speaking newcomers with individuals and resources within their communities.

The following THREE types of information are needed for Mandarin speaking newcomers:

1) Information on basic settlement needs
The category of information should cater to everyone’s basic needs in settling to a new country, such as where to find accommodation, how to apply for a health card, transportation, schools/college/university, restaurants, grocery stores, China towns, banks, hospitals and so on. It also needs to include a list of agencies that provide services in Mandarin and specific contact information and addresses. A list of Chinese organizations and religious groups with detailed contact information and addresses is also needed. Chinese religious groups have played a very important role in assisting these newcomers with their settlement.

Leaders of religious organizations need to be contacted for assistance in the distribution of settlement information packages. A quick reference sheet of available settlement services should
be compiled and provided to these leaders. Official figures reveal that immigrants from China have the highest percentage, about 67%, of no-religious affiliation upon arrival (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 1996). However, empirical studies of the group in Canada and Australia found that there has been a tendency of Mandarin speaking newcomers to attend religious activities in their process of settlement. Some Chinese religious organizations also organize a variety of activities to help newcomers settle in the new country (Da, 2001; George et al., 2000).

Currently, there are different versions of Chinese Yellow Pages and Chinese business and services directories, which provide comprehensive information. However, they are not always easily accessible within the mainstream community. Information on where to locate a copy of the directories needs to be included in the information package at the airport.

2) Occupational information and resources for highly educated immigrants in all occupations and professions are extremely inadequate and inaccurate (Kerr & Simard, 2003). Many professional immigrants like doctors, nurses, and teachers do not know where to go for help. Many of them go back to school to get Canadian qualifications, or take jobs for which they are over-qualified to make a living. At present, information for foreign-trained engineers is available and regulated, so they know where to go for credential assessments and assistance after arrival, but there is a lack of information for people in other occupations. A comprehensive list of occupational associations in Canada by province is needed, along with some hints or basic steps to follow in locating and contacting the appropriate organizations and associations. Agencies must take an initiative in making connections with the professional associations to form networks beneficial to advising/referencing Mainland Chinese immigrants to occupation specific websites, such as the Access to Professions and Trades Unit of the Ontario Ministry of Education.
Service Delivery Model of Settlement Services for Mandarin Speaking Newcomers from Mainland China

**Pre-Migration Stage**
Application Accepted in China
Website details of:
- Canadian culture, social system, ways of life and settlement related issues
- Importance of learning English before immigration

**Arrival in Canada – Information referrals to ISAP Settlement Services**
- Newcomer Information Package available to new immigrants at airport
- Direct to ISAP services in Mandarin (pamphlet or brochures)

**ISAP agencies (One-stop service)**
Assessment, Information and Referral (Three components)
- Basic settlement Services
- Services for labour market entry
- Specialized Settlement Services

**Mobile Settlement Workers**
- Shopping Malls
- Medical Offices
- Religious Centre
- Supermarket
- Cultural Centres

**Community Pilot Project**
- Training of Mandarin community leaders in referring newcomers to settlement services

**Virtual Agency**
- Mandarin specific reference and referral information for newcomers provided in Chinese
- Forum where Mandarin newcomers can connect with other Mandarin newcomers and ones who have been in Canada for a longer period of time
- Directory of services and agencies for Mandarin speaking newcomers
It is suggested that the settlement workers make active contact with professionals in the Mainland Chinese community. A database should be created which include possible companies/individuals who can provide internship/mentorship opportunities for professional immigrants, and companies who have employed recent Mainland Chinese immigrants. The Business Directory of Toronto which is divided by the Standard Industrial Code (SIC) could be utilized in referring Mandarin speaking newcomers to companies in specific professions and industries.

3) The third type of information is on services related to family issues, such as parenting, child care, sponsoring family members, elder care, violence against women and children, and legal agencies to deal with these issues. The barriers to accessing the labour market, especially professional jobs, have a great impact on family life among Mandarin speaking newcomers. Marriage crises and family conflicts are associated with unemployment and economic status among the group of immigrants.

Referrals have to be made by settlement workers to relevant and appropriate service agencies.

### 7.3 Specific Recommendations for Settlement Programs:

Two sets of recommendations are proposed in the following. One is generic recommendations with an attempt to improve the ISAP, LINC and JSW services which will benefit not only Mandarin speaking newcomers but also other immigrant groups who share some of the needs and barriers in settlement with Mandarin speaking newcomers. The second set of recommendations is specifically targeted to Mandarin speaking newcomers.

#### 7.3.1 Generic Recommendations

- Newcomers should have an initial settlement assessment, to determine their settlement needs, and to provide them with the appropriate information and contacts.
• Provide “one stop” assessment services to cater to the needs of all age groups, men and women, including services for women, parents and their children, teenagers and seniors.

• Services and programs need to be flexible with criteria in terms of length of years in Canada. If not eligible for ISAP, referrals should be made to specific NSP programs.

• Settlement workers need to be culturally sensitive to the particular needs of immigrants. Seminars and workshops should be designed to cover areas such as social and cultural adjustment difficulties and to discuss best practices.

• Settlement workers should be aware of and familiar with local resources and information useful for Mandarin speaking newcomers. As much as possible, settlement workers should make the initial contacts with the appropriate resource/agency.

• Orientation workshops should be age specific and in groups, and target to the needs of newcomers, such as how to apply for government subsidized housing, and what is co-op housing, and where to go to find the information.

LINC
• LINC should provide more advanced and in-depth language training.
• English for the workplace should be made available.
• LINC should also be made available after three years upon arrival if necessary.
• English skills should move beyond TOEFL with emphasis on spoken skills.

JSWs
• Workshops should be more comprehensive and include specific sessions for professionals.
• Moving beyond basic resume writing and job searching, advanced topics should include networking and trends in professions.
• Provide specific information related to the professions of newcomers. For example, “Digital Eve” is an Internet based network of women in IT.
HOST

- Currently HOST mainly connects newcomers with native Canadians; but considering the needs of Mandarin speaking newcomers, it also needs to connect them with Mandarin speaking mentors within their community.

From a review of settlement service delivery models some other useful considerations for the delivery of settlement services were gathered from other Canadian provinces and Australia, please see Appendix G.

### 7.3.2 Specific and Targeted Recommendations for Mandarin Speaking Newcomers

Overall the existing Cantonese speaking services must demonstrate that they are responsive and meeting the needs of Mandarin speaking newcomers. The existing Chinese focused agencies therefore need to evaluate and assess their services to Mandarin speaking newcomers. Cultural training to staff in Chinese-focused agencies or agencies who serve high proportions of Mandarin speaking newcomers is necessary. If services are found to be insufficient or lacking, initiatives should be taken to address changes in the needs of this newcomer group. Chinese serving agencies must also consider providing additional training for settlement workers to become educated in the culturally specific needs of Mandarin speaking newcomers.

The following are recommendations that are targeted to Mandarin speaking newcomers specifically:

**ISAP Information Package**

- An information package about ISAP settlement programs and services in English/Mandarin needs to be distributed among Chinese community and organizations as widely as possible, including Chinatowns, Chinese shopping malls, Chinese supermarkets, restaurants, religion groups.
• An information package needs to be distributed at major Canadian supermarkets like *Wal-Mart, No Frills, Canadian Tire, Zellers, Sears*, banks, local community recreation centres, libraries, and subway stations.

• Information packages will also include names of major Chinese newspapers, radio programs and TV channels (such as OMNI 2) designed for Mandarin speaking newcomers, as well as major Mainland Chinese associations and their websites, such as Chinese Information Centre, Chinese Professional Association of Canada, Centre for Information and Community Services, and the 211 hotline in Toronto.

• Consultation with major Chinese newspapers and TV channel (OMNI 2) to have a special column or ad to introduce the ISAP programs and services.

As noted previously, Mandarin speaking newcomers tend to seek help from friends or relatives rather than going to social services for assistance. The above recommendations will help attract Mandarin-speaking newcomers to settlement services.

**Orientation Workshops**

• Orientation workshops for Mandarin speaking newcomers need to take into account the cultural background of Mandarin speaking newcomers, and workshops need to be delivered by staff who are able to speak Mandarin and are familiar with Chinese culture, as well as have solid knowledge about Canadian culture.

**Mobile Settlement Worker**

• There is an increase of hiring staff who are able to speak Mandarin based on the Ontario Regions Survey of Agencies serving Mandarin speaking newcomers. The results showed that among 31 agencies being surveyed, 21 hired staff who speak Mandarin language. The rest of the agencies who do not have Mandarin speaking staff, use a variety of means to serve this group of clients, such as volunteers, friends, students or referrals.
To meet with the language needs of Mandarin speaking newcomers, it is suggested that settlement agencies in concentrated residential areas of Mainland Chinese newcomers need to hire “mobile” Mandarin speaking settlement workers to perform strategically planned outreach in high-traffic settings, such as libraries, shopping malls, cultural centres, supermarkets, restaurants and medical centre. Emphasize the use of a mobile worker ONLY in areas of high needs. In lower need areas they should be utilizing referral, or volunteers as some of the serving agencies currently do or hiring Mandarin speaking staff, rotating days for outreach.

The “mobile” settlement worker needs to be based in a service provider organization (SPO) only one or two days a week, thereby spending a maximum number of hours per week doing on-site outreach services in the community. The outreach services provided by the settlement worker will include brochure distribution, in-depth conversation/interview with clients to discuss their particular needs. When possible, the worker should also have either computer(s) or laptop(s) set-up for clients to check websites for up-to-date information regarding settlement services. Records of each meeting should be kept and followed-up on.

Funding for such services should be provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, considering the large population of Mandarin speaking newcomers. The funding is necessary. Engagement of workers should be based on the number of newcomers in specific areas.

It is important, however, to bear in mind that designing and providing services in the diverse range of dialects of the Chinese newcomers is almost impossible. Studies of various newcomer groups have signaled the fact that service provision in the first language of the newcomers is important in preliminary contacts between settlement workers and newcomer clients. Language is an entry point and the quality of information is of utmost importance in assisting newcomers. Newcomers are also eager to acquire sufficient familiarity with English language to enable them secure entry into the labour market and to succeed in Canada.

- Settlement workers commonly serving Chinese clients should be fluently bilingual in both English and Mandarin.
Volunteer Opportunities

- Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) should provide Mandarin speaking newcomers with sources for volunteer opportunities that are relevant and value-added.

Mentors

- Provide specific and accurate employment information related to the professions of Mandarin speaking newcomers, for example, “Digital Eve” which is an Internet based network of women in IT as noted in the previous section.

- Match Mandarin speaking newcomers with individuals in their own community, especially those who have been living in Canada for at least a few years.

- Matching of Mandarin speaking newcomers to mentors should consider the profession of potential Mandarin speaking mentors to maximize the benefits of newcomer–mentor relationship, such as increased network ability and professional guidance.

Virtual Agency

We propose a Mandarin specific Virtual Agency to be created. Essentially the agency will be an extension of settlement.org, but with information geared towards Mandarin speaking newcomers from Mainland China. The website or virtual agency would strive to provide useful settlement information that can be accessed by this immigrant group. The virtual agency should be created by Chinese focused settlement service agencies, with funding provided by CIC. Suggestions for information to be included:

- All or at least essential information should be available on the virtual agency in Chinese
- Listings of settlement service agencies and services for this immigrant group
- Contact info or website links to useful professional associations that may be useful to this group, Chinese Professional Association of Canada (CPAC), Centre for Information and Community Services (CICS)
• Events available in various regions of Ontario, that pertain to the needs of this group (i.e. job fairs, job search workshops, money management classes) – events should be kept up-to-date and should strive to include any functions/events held by specific settlement service providers (to ensure Mandarin newcomers have as many resources available to them as possible)

• Discussion forums to allow for Mandarin speaking newcomers and previous Mandarin speaking newcomers to network and ask questions

• Postings for work and volunteer opportunities

Pilot Project – Community Specific Information Providers

• The purpose of this project would be to utilize the strong tendency of this immigrant group to depend on friends and family for settlement information, while easing the workload of Mandarin speaking settlement workers by cutting down on the number of service referral inquires. Therefore to tap into this tendency, an all-expenses paid program to train and disburse Community Specific Information Providers should be developed. These providers will be leaders and members of the Mandarin speaking community who are connected with newcomer Mandarin speakers from Mainland China (Chinese associations, agencies and religious groups). Settlement service workers will develop and execute information referral training sessions for these members. Participation in the training would be purely voluntary, but would be a valuable experience for the attendees and serve a greater purpose of having well informed community members who can refer Mandarin speaking newcomers to available services. Community Specific Information Providers should keep track of the number of Mandarin newcomers they refer and stay in touch with their trainers (settlement worker) for further training when required.

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