

**“MODELS OF SETTLEMENT SERVICE”  
OCASI Annual Conference  
Geneva Park, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2000**

The following is a summary of the content and follow up discussion on the “Models of Settlement Service” workshop presented at Geneva Park on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2000 as part of the annual OCASI Professional Development Conference. This workshop was attended by many representatives of the settlement sector both from the GTA and other Ontario communities.

Participants in the discussion felt that it was a valuable opportunity to explore some fundamental issues that require further debate and clarification. The panellists therefore decided to make this event the beginning of an ongoing web-based dialogue. It is hoped that this will contribute to strengthening the voice of the community-based settlement service providers in negotiating the terms of the current restructuring of the settlement sector.

We are therefore beginning this process by posting a summary of the workshop. Additional contributions in the future may include commentaries on these presentations and summaries of new research and policy documents relevant to this topic.

**Presenters:** Ms. Paula De Coito, Executive Director, Social Planning council of Peel (SPC, Peel)  
Ms. Uzma Shakir, Executive Director, Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)  
Mr. Mwarigha, M. S., Project Coordinator, Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA)  
Ms. Laura Simich, New Comer Children & Youth Study Project Coordinator, Culture Community & Health Studies, CAMH, Clarke Site

**Moderator:** Mr. Ted Richmond, Administrative Coordinator, Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS)- Toronto

**Commentator:** Mr. Tim Rees, Coordinator, Access and Equity Unit, City of Toronto

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**PRESENTATIONS**

*Paula De Coito* spoke to the topic of “Different Perspectives on the Provision of Services for Immigrants.” Her presentation was based on chapters 6 & 7 of the recently published research report entitled “Setting the Course: A Framework for Coordinating Services for Immigrants and Refugees in Peel Region” by the SPC of Peel.

The main points of her presentation are as follows:

- Settlement services are organized around different theoretical approaches which have direct practical implications.
- The main theoretical perspectives on the provision of services for immigrants are the following:
  1. The Personal Perspective
  2. The Civic Perspective
  3. The Ecological Perspective
  4. The Multiculturalism Perspective
  5. The Anti-Racism Perspective
  6. The Adaptation Perspective
  7. The Transformation Perspective
- Each theoretical perspective is based on a specific ideological framework which shapes the values, focus, problem definition, questions asked, consequences and criticism of the specific perspective.

<b>PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>MAJOR VALUE</b>	<b>MAJOR FOCUS</b>
The Personal Perspective	The Individual	Needs Satisfaction
The Civic Perspective	The Citizen	Rights and Responsibilities
The Ecological Perspective	The Society	Social Stability Accommodation Integration
The Multiculturalism Perspective	Diversity	Otherness Accommodation
The Anti-Racism Perspective	Equal Opportunity Fairness	Power Relations Redistribution of Power

Source: De Coito, Paula and Williams, Laurie. (2000). *Setting the Course: A Framework for Coordinating Services for Immigrants and Refugees in Peel Region*. Mississauga: The Social Planning Council of Peel.

- For example services coming from a *personal perspective* look at the satisfaction of individual needs as the focus of their work. In order to address these needs workers need to become specialized and as a consequence positions such as the ethnic expert and the settlement worker are developed.

- Working from the *civic perspective* the focus is on the citizen's rights and responsibilities as well as civic participation. Workers take on advocacy and militant roles and look at the role of government in the development of laws and policies.
- The *ecological perspective* looks at society as a whole. Its focus is on social stability, accommodation and integration. The criticisms associated with this perspective are related to the issues of equal integration rather than peripheral integration. In some cases accommodation can lead to maintenance of the status quo.
- All perspectives are different but complimentary. Although it is very difficult to find a way of harmonizing the different perspectives towards a common goal, programs should try to accommodate consideration of different perspectives at least at different levels of planning and delivery of services.

### ***Mwarigha, M. S.***

- Settlement renewal has been taking place without active/conscious participation of service providers. Changes in the sector are happening "by default."
- Other provinces have had provincial and local governments that have consciously tried to shape this process and which have provided space for community networks to participate; the same has not happened in Ontario.
- The general goal of the settlement service sector is to eliminate barriers (including systemic issues such as anti-racism and equity issues) by providing generic services (eg. Language training).
- The settlement process can be broken down into three stages:
  - basic/initial: dealing with issues such as documentation, access to health services, housing and education.
  - intermediate: once access to the above mentioned services then there is a need to understand and access legal system, labour and further education.
  - tertiary: when active civic participation and issues related to citizenship take place.
- In order for the sector to establish if the settlement and integration process has been successful, settlement services need to have a time limit. It may be one, three or five years, but it should not be longer than that.
- The current funder-defined settlement renewal process has been oriented towards 'marketization' with a competitive system in which agencies are forced to bid for contracts. One of the implications of this type of orientation is that larger agencies have more resources to allocate towards the bidding process and as a result there has been a decline in the number of smaller ethno-specific agencies.

- Currently the control and allocation of funds is outside of NGO control. Settlement policy is defined by immigration policy.
- To change the current state of settlement services, we providers have to change our mind sets in relation to social services and welfare. We need to go back to the funders and push for a multi-sectorial body to control the allocation of funds.

*Uzma Shakir* presented a look into the planning and implementation of the Integrated Settlement Planning Research Project (ISPR). The summary report entitled “Re-Visioning the Newcomer Settlement Support System” was prepared by the ISPR Consortium (this consortium includes: The Chinese Canadian National Council, Toronto Chapter, The Community and Social Planning Council of Toronto, The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, The Hispanic Development Council and the Multicultural Coalition for Access to Family Services).

- The ISPR project addresses the issue of developing an integrated approach to settlement planning.
- The study looked at how a re-visioned model would produce a more coordinated and coherent system of service planning and delivery that makes the needs of the growing and increasingly diverse immigrant population central.
- The concept of immigration per se has become an entity, a historical identity of itself. An immigrant never ceases to be an immigrant. Being an immigrant defines our relationship to society. The current settlement system is very fragmented and disconnected. However, on the other hand the onus of fitting in is still very much on the immigrant, which fosters inequities in access to both information and service supports.
- Right now the so called “settlement sector” is an isolated sector where all newcomers are to be serviced for a time-limited period and then become settled. This sector has ethno-specific service providers and multi-ethnic service providers. Occasional partnerships occur between each group and among them, but they are usually inequitable and project specific. Furthermore, the sector as a whole forms relations and partnerships with the rest of social and political institutions in society to facilitate the settlement process, but these relations are sporadic and not integral to the workings of the so called “non-settlement sector.”
- The settlement sector has always been located in the periphery of the mainstream sector. However these two sectors cannot be disassociated from one another because the mainstream sector is also culturally specific. People don’t move from an ethnic-based settlement sector into a mainstream sector that is value free.

- The existing delivery system is established in a top down model, with policy and governance located in the furthest reaches of governmental decision-making from the experience of its recipient. It is static and bureaucratic and fragmented non-system which favours the needs of larger service suppliers and lacks any mandated integrated or coordinated planning structures and processes.
- We believe that for a true process of integration to occur the centre of the process has to be the immigrant or the immigrant family rather than the type of service.
- People's lives cannot be fragmented in order to suit specific mandates. We cannot tell someone that has just arrived and is coming to our agency that we will provide them with ESL classes but cannot help him find housing or childcare because is not part of our funding.
- A re-visioned system should be immigrant centred, placing emphasis on the general and particular support requirements of immigrants and refugees. It should be a dynamic and publicly funded system, holistic, community0based and coherent. It should be intentionally planned using inclusive, mandated planning strategies and structures based on equity, accessibility, participation, coherence and anti-racism.
- Settlement is not a discreet and isolated sector but rather integrated into other socio-political institutions in society (like employment and training, health, education, social services as a whole, etc.)
- These goals can only be achieved if there is an integrated approach to how different institutions in society function and deliver services in a meaningful manner to the changing demographics of society, thus, making settlement integral to their mandate.

### ***Tim Rees***

- From differing perspectives, all presenters make the point that the existing model and definition of settlement that we are functioning under is out of date. The changing and restrictive policy and fiscal framework, combined with the nature of migration today has left all the settlement stakeholders unprepared. Government policy mechanisms are inappropriate and structures are antiquated. Immigrant service agencies are totally overwhelmed by the needs, numbers and aspirations of today's newcomers. As Uzma Shakir states, we now have "A settlement sector where no one gets settled".
- The provision of settlement services to migrants in Canada has largely been a history of voluntary self-help. Until the rise of the welfare state in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, governments were not the primary providers of health care and income support to Canadians. This placed particular onus on individual and community self-reliance to care for people's needs.

- After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, in constructing the Keynesian welfare state, immigrant community service organizations increasingly became partners to government in providing services as part of the state's primary role of building a network of both universal and needs-targeted social services and programs.
- With advances in government social services and programs from the 1940s through the 1980s, the state became the primary provider of income for the poor, the elderly and the unemployed; governments also provided substantial funding for a wide range of immigrant, ethnic, and minority group service and advocacy groups.
- The last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century however, has seen a significant pulling back of the public sector. Governments at all levels undertook deep cuts to their spending and services. A political culture of public and state responsibility for services and citizen well-being turned into a belief in markets as optimal distributors of services, and self reliance as a primary human virtue.
- While all areas of public sector activity have experienced Government downsizing and downloading, the settlement sector has been particularly hard hit. The sheer size of the numbers of immigrants, the composition of immigrants coming from all parts of the world; the very different skills and expectations of the modern immigrant; the suburban and dispersed nature of settlement particularly in Toronto; the diminishing and redefining role of the public sector in supporting the settlement process; and the increasing racialization of inequality and immigrant poverty – combine to raise some very serious and urgent questions as to how immigrant communities will develop and relate to the large society as we move into the new millennium.
- In this neo-conservative climate, government has in fact come up with its own new model of settlement that fits within the ideology of reinventing government. As Mwarigha says, it has become “Settlement Renewal by default”. The fundamental message of the “reinventing government” school is that the government's role is to set policy while the delivery function can best be left to organizations outside of the state sector or operating under quasi-market conditions within a reorganized public sector or the settlement sector, the net effect has been the movement towards the commercialisation and marketization of the non-profit immigrant settlement sector. For immigrant service agencies, the effects of this marketization means spending more resources on negotiating with government; increased administrative costs with monitoring service agreements; less accountability to the community; forced shift in missions; and a decrease in advocacy and educational work.
- Immigrant service agencies are being used - and prepared to be used simply to survive – as the cheap service delivery agents for the leaner, meaner government.
- Paula De Coito has laid out an excellent framework in understanding the different perspectives, the different roles that the settlement sector provides. The settlement sector is being bombarded by and is expected to incorporate all perspectives. The present focus, largely determined by the funders, is on the provision of specifically defined services to individual newcomers. It largely

ignores the civic, ecological, multiculturalism, anti-racism and transformative perspectives. These other perspectives need to be brought back into play.

- If government can reinvent itself, perhaps it is time for the community-based immigrant settlement sector to also reinvent itself.
- Immigrant settlement agencies not only:
  - (1) Deliver settlement services, but also
  - (2) Undertake research and information gathering
  - (3) Participate in the policy-making process
  - (4) Promote public information and public education
  - (5) Undertake advocacy on refugee & immigrant issues
  - (6) Serve as mediators, brokers, bridge builder for a variety of stakeholders
  - (7) Influence the public agenda & debate, by using the media, etc.
  - (8) Provide an important community development role
- Apart from the first function – delivering settlement services as they are being defined by government funders – the other seven functions are in danger of being lost.
- “Partnerships” in and of themselves can not of course be seen as an alternative form of service delivery.
- Partnerships have different meanings. For example:
  1. consultative (i.e. advisory)
  2. contributory (i.e. funds)
  3. merger/takeover
  4. operational (i.e. delivery of work that is purchased)
  5. collaborative (i.e. real sharing of power)
- The first four meanings are clearly operational in the settlement sector, but the last – a real sharing of power – is not.
- In clarifying who does what, and who does not do what, immigrant settlement agencies need to be careful in not being sucked into substituting for public sector provision. The community-based sector’s role should perhaps be seen more as enriching and supplementing public sector provision.
- Clarity in discussing the differing roles and responsibilities of potential partners is essential to the task of developing new models of settlement services.

*Laura Simich*

- RECENT TRENDS IN IMMIGRATION
  - Changing Profile of Immigrants
  - Changing Labour Market
  - Increasing Poverty Rates
  - Lack of Affordable Housing
  - Increasing Secondary Migration
  
- BASIC SHORT-TERM SETTLEMENT SERVICES  
(Services that receive funding as part of settlement)
  - General Orientation
  - Information and Referral
  - Language Classes
  - Employment Counseling
  
- RELATED TO SETTLEMENT  
(Not funded as part of settlement services)
  - Legal Aid
  - Housing Advocacy
  - Cultural Interpretation
  - Appropriate and Accessible Health Care, Especially Mental Health Services
  - Family Counseling
  
- SENIOR GOVERNMENT SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR  
SETTLEMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS
  - Federal
    - ISAP, LINC, Host Programs; Multiculturalism Program; Settlement Renewal Projects;  
Labour Market and Job Search Programs (?)
  - Provincial
    - Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP)     \$6.1 m (1995-96) - \$3.9 m (1997-98)
  
- OTHER SOURCES
  - United Way, Maytree, Trillium
  - Municipal Government                    (Grants; Public Health)
  - Mainstream Partners                        (Health Care Institutions, Public Schools)
  
- FUNDING PRESSURES
  - Overall Funding Reductions
  - Programs Eliminated
  - Shifts to Project Funding
  - Integration vs. Specialization

Disadvantages for Small, New, and Specialized CBOs  
Advantages for Larger and For-Profit Agencies

- Although there were increases in federal funding to the settlement sector, this is not significant for service agencies because funding restrictions make it harder for community agencies to access these funds.
- On the other hand, federal downloading of settlement responsibilities to the provincial level have overwhelmed available resources.
- The settlement sector has relied on provincial funding for the bulk of its services. The largest provincial cuts at this level in the last couple of years, have reduced funding to the sector by almost 50%.
- As the governmental funding decreases service agencies do not have the necessary resources to provide for the complex changes in immigrant needs. There is a need to integrate the settlement sector into the mainstream sector.

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## DISCUSSION

Windsor agency member to all the panellists:

How do you suggest that service providers from small communities let funders know that our clientele has different needs from those in Toronto? Their uniformed model of settlement funding does not apply to the needs of small towns, we get a lot of secondary migration.

Thunder Bay agency member:

We have similar concerns about the imposition of models from Metro. How do we articulate the Ontario settlement diversity?

Mwarigha:

In Toronto we feel there isn't a Toronto model either. There is just one model and it doesn't work there either because it has been developed without any input from the sector. That is why it is important to take initiative and change the level of participation from the sector. We should develop a coordinating body to bring our issues to the government funders.

Uzma:

The issue is that the model should look at immigrant needs as the centre of the model rather than to have a Toronto or a Thunder Bay model.

Paula:

OCASI is a useful instrument in terms of a coordinating body. It is also important to try and develop micro relations directly with the funders.

Windsor agency member to all the panellists:

Windsor does not have a local CIC office.

Mwarigha:

The government's idea of an immigrant centered model is to try and tailor the number and profiles of immigrants to have less "settlement needs" (i.e. higher education, higher economic level).

Dixie Bloor agency member

He brought up a question about tenant rights. One of his clients had been unfairly charged a move-in fee by the building's superintendent. He had lost his money but did not want to have an argument because he was scared he wouldn't find a new apartment.

Mwarigha:

These kind of fees are illegal and the client should be able to get his money back. Call me at CERA and we will discuss different possibilities.

Paula:

This case gives an example in how a client using an individual perspective is in contradiction with a civic

approach which would give him the right to litigate and fight the system.

Participant:

You could try to call the superintendent directly as your client's advocate. Landlords listen to the word advocacy, they usually respond to this.

TJ.

I'm trying to conceptualize what we're trying to do. I don't agree that the ecological model fosters the status quo. I believe an ecological perspective is about sustainability, healthy communities and community development, all these aspects are not necessarily stable because you need to adapt to the changes in our communities and our environment which represent organic movement. Another issue that it's not often discussed in the sector is the problem with ageism. Young advocates are not always taken seriously when they try to articulate or advocate certain issues. I have heard now that OCASI has an initiative to integrate a youth member I think it is a great initiative.

Paula:

In fact we agree that ageism is a concern and OCASI is trying to address this issue as you mentioned by inviting a youth delegate into our Management Board.

Windsor Agency member:

I am a host program coordinator at my agency. Actually we are not even a settlement agency but people come and ask for settlement services, in many cases I provide the support I can based on my own immigrant experience. We don't really follow any specific perspective but instead we apply different perspectives depending on the client's needs. I am very glad to be able to participate in forums such as this one. Just recently I found a resource which I find very useful it is a report called Best Settlement Practices. I believe that immigrants have the power to integrate with the support of the community and the settlement sector. I think it's an immigrant choice if after ten years he has not integrated.

Uzma:

Actually that depends. Immigrants and refugees have different skills and some of them may be more or less helpful in the integration process. Putting the onus of integration on immigrants creates a differential system. Besides in many cases the first generation of immigrants have to become part of the labour force very soon in many cases before they have a chance to develop English language skills or learn about the health system, the education system, the legal system etc. For example if a person comes and works in a factory for ten or twenty years he doesn't have time to take ESL classes, if that person gets downsized ten years later he is still in need of some type of services. But you are right my role as a settlement counsellor is to keep reminding my immigrant clients that their goal is to integrate.

Paula:

In the process of integration immigrants have to face both internal as well as external barriers. Internal barriers refer to the individual differences and abilities on the other hand external barriers are systemic issues that minorities have to face when trying to gain a space in the host society.

Dixie Bloor Agency member (also Director of Russian Ethnic Community):

To have one centralized settlement service also has its own difficulties. The ethnic community also has a role in facilitating the integration process. Their role is to educate the different systems at a more local level about issues of cultural differences. For example the Russian community has taken the initiative to invite immigrant Russian teachers to meet with Canadian teachers and talk about the differences in the Canadian and Russian educational systems, how the children are taught back home and how this influences how Russian parents and students behave in Canadian schools.