

# REPORT

## 2023 Prairies & Northern Territories Winter Summit

Looking Ahead: Collaboration and Innovation for Successful Integration

February 27-28, 2023



WINTER - HIVER

**2023 PRAIRIES  
& NORTHERN  
TERRITORIES  
SUMMIT**

**SOMMET DES  
PRAIRIES ET  
DES TERRITOIRES  
DU NORD 2023**



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## Introduction

The first Prairies and Northern Territories Summit was held in February 2021 and welcomed approximately 570 participants.

The second edition was held on November/December 2021 with approximately the same number of participants. Again, many attendees were from the umbrella agencies and the key immigration service provider organizations (SPOs). However, several partner agencies attended for the first time as well. The Northern Territories were also represented.

The 2023 Prairies and Northern Territories Winter Summit was held on February 27 and 28, 2023. Some 300 participants attended the event.

The event is a collaboration between the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA), Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO) and Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement Integration Agencies (SAISIA), in partnership with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

These non-profit umbrella organizations represent agencies that provide resettlement, settlement, and integration services to newcomers in the respective provinces. Their mandate includes providing leadership and support to members and helping increase the level of service to newcomers through professional development, networking, and collaboration.

As a federal government agency, IRCC facilitates the arrival of immigrants, provides protection to refugees, and offers programming to help newcomers settle in Canada. It also grants citizenship and issues travel documents to Canadians.

The 2023 PNT Winter Summit is designed for leaders and managers from settlement and integration agencies across Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Northern Territories.

The purpose of the 2023 PNT Winter Summit was to provide leaders with an opportunity to share new knowledge and expertise with peers while generating insights and strategies for better service delivery and organization planning with a focus on looking toward IRCC Call for proposals (CFP) 2024.

This report overviews the 2023 PNT Winter Summit presentations and discussions. In addition, the report summarizes key points and presents takeaways for reference.

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## Summit Format

The 2023 Prairies and Northern Territories Winter Summit was held in person at the Delta Hotels by Marriott Edmonton South Conference Centre, Edmonton, Alberta. Summit was held across three rooms: Grand Ballroom, Edmonton Room and Top of the Hill Room.

The Summit was conducted in English. However, some sessions and presenters conducted their sessions in French. Simultaneous translation was provided throughout the Summit.

Moderators and presenters acknowledged the Indigenous and Metis land where they were located. The purpose of land acknowledgement is to provide a moment for reflection and appreciation for the gifts and people of the lands.

Participants could ask questions through the Summit's mobile application and see each other's questions during sessions. In addition, a voting system allowed presenters and moderators to select questions to be answered at the end of the session when time allowed.

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## Acronyms Used in the Report

### Service Providers

AAISIA	Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
AFTC	Aurora Family Therapy Centre
AHC	Action for Healthy Communities
CBFY	Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth
CIWA	Calgary Immigrant Women Association
CNF	Centre for Newcomers
CSS	Catholic Social Services
EISA	Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
GGP	Global Gathering Place
HRNC	Humboldt Regional Newcomer Centre
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
IRCOM	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba
IWS	Immigrant Women of Saskatoon
LIP	Local Immigration Partnerships
MANSO	Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations
RIF	Francophone immigration network
SAISIA	Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies
SODS	Saskatoon Open Door Society
UCC	Ukrainian Canadian Council
WIS	Westman Immigrant Services

### Common Terms

CA	Contribution agreement
CUAET	Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel
CLB	Canadian Language Benchmarks
CFP	Call for proposals
CLIC	Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada
EDI	Equity, diversity and inclusion
GARs	Government assisted refugees
HIPPY	Home Instruction Program for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
iCARE	Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment
LARC	Language Assessment and Referral Centre
NAARS	Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services
OPW	Online Province Wide
PNT	Prairies and Northwest Territories Region
POM	Provincial Online Model
PR	Permanent resident
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program

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SPOs	Service provider organizations
SWIS	Settlement Workers in Schools
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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## Day 1. February 27th, 2023, A.M.

### Welcome and Land Opening Remarks

#### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Sarosh Rizvi, Executive Director of the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA), greets participants at the 2023 PNT Summit and proceeds to land acknowledgement. He introduces Patricia Wilson joining from Ottawa through Zoom.

### IRCC Opening Remarks

#### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

##### Presenter:

- Patricia Wilson, Director General, Settlement Network, IRCC

Wilson acknowledges the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector.

She mentions the various initiatives regarding refugee settlement in the country, including privately sponsored refugees and Afghan refugees. Between January 1<sup>st</sup> and October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, over 144 000 displaced Ukrainians settled in Canada.

Wilson stresses the need to learn about systemic racism within the sector and for greater relationships between newcomers and indigenous people. Authentic indigenous content and perspectives must be included in settlement services.

The Government of Canada uses Gender-Based Analysis (GBA+) as a tool for intersectional analysis. This framework will be incorporated in CFP 2024.

### Plenary Session 1. Developing an Anti-Racism Framework for the Settlement Sector and Pursuing Truth and Reconciliation as Settlement Organizations

#### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

##### Presenters:

- Seid Oumer Ahmed, Associate Executive Director, MANSO
- Shereen Denetto, Executive Director, IRCOM

This plenary session has two presentations.



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## Pursuing Truth and Reconciliation as Settlement Organizations

**IRCOM.** The organization focuses on understanding its role as settlers on indigenous land to become allies. Its mission is to empower newcomer families to integrate into the broader community through affordable transitional housing, programs, and services. IRCOM's objectives align with Canada's Truth and Reconciliation. The organization celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May.

**Learning.** 10+ years working on Truth and Reconciliation within the settlement sector raises questions such as:

- How to offer settlement/resettlement services versus perpetuating a settler society?
- How to negotiate population growth leading to land encroachment versus giving Indigenous people their 'land back'?
- How to develop a framework of multiculturalism while preserving the distinct status as First Peoples of Canada?
- How to foster multiculturalism as inclusion in the context of anti-Indigenous racism and forced assimilation?
- How to approach newcomers' regularization and access to citizenship as a pride factor in light of the negative impacts of the Canadian nation on Indigenous people?
- What is our outlook for immigration in a three-year levels plan compared to what the sector can learn from the Indigenous seven generations' approach?
- How to reconcile the vision of newcomers integrating into the ideal "Canadian" and Indigenous identities?

**Takeaways.** Relational work is the heart of Truth and Reconciliation. IRCOM staff and families often see parallels between newcomers' experiences and Indigenous people's experiences: commonalities of segregation, cultural suppression, land displacement, environmental impacts of resource extraction, legal disenfranchisement and all the negative effects of imperialism and colonization.

**Relationship Building.** IRCOM staff identifies with the impacts of colonization and relates to the Indigenous peoples' strengths in Canada, such as the customs, worldviews, arts, drumming, and dance. Multi-generational settlers and newcomers are also accountable to the past and the ongoing legacy of colonization.

**Accountability.** The settlement sector can play a pivotal role in accessing newcomers before they have formed opinions, providing alternative truth and highlighting strengths guided by Indigenous partners. IRCOM has worked with a Cultural Advisor, John Houle, since 2016 to lead its Truth and Reconciliation work. IRCOM Strategic Plan also has ensured that the whole organization, at every level, has a buy-in and is aligned regarding this strategic priority. It has also opened the doors to attract Indigenous community members to join IRCOM's Board.

### **Programming.**

1. The Common Ground Project enhances relationships and fosters understanding between newcomers to Canada and Indigenous peoples.

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2. The Open Roads transformational writing program builds meaningful connections and mutual understanding through this writing program.
  3. Youth Peace Camp promotes connection and understanding through peace-building and intercultural dialogue frameworks.
  4. Youth 4 Truth and Reconciliation is a partnership with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre connecting across cultures and land-based learning as an essential component.

**TRC Calls to Action.** The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action 93 and 94 specifically address newcomers. Call to Action 93 focuses on the need to include a more diverse and inclusive history of Indigenous peoples in the guides for Citizenship and the test, and 94 focuses on re-wording the Oath of Citizenship. IRCOM interprets these calls broadly to speak to all the information and orientation work with newcomers.

**Co-Programming.** Co-programming with Indigenous partners and partner settlement organizations allowed to implement

1. Positive Partnerships Event for staff held with Knowledge Keeper Clayton Sandy, Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network and the MB Museum;
2. Cold City Warm Hearts event with Rossbrook House.

**Current Challenges.** They revolve around:

- Appropriate content to teach newcomers
- Information sharing about this traumatic reality with refugee newcomers
- Respectful and meaningful ways to receive direction from the Cultural Advisor and Indigenous partners
- Recruiting and retaining Indigenous staff
- Questions from racialized and/or religious minority staff
- Focus on building meaningful relationships versus 'together but separate.'
- Maintaining our commitment and consistent level of resources over the longer-term
- Competing training needs of staff
- Post-COVID conditions in Winnipeg create a challenging environment to be and work in

### Developing an Anti-Racism Framework for the Settlement Sector

**MANSO.** Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO) provides resources for settlement agencies to enhance the quality and delivery of their settlement programs to newcomers in Manitoba. MANSO currently has 70 member organizations that welcome, support, and engage newcomers. Its mandate focuses on communication, coordination, collaboration, and capacity building.

**Background.** The issue of racism and systemic barriers within settlement has only been recently discussed as a sector. Therefore, a group of BIPOC leaders and staff from a wide range of MANSO member organizations met to develop an Anti-Racism Policy Resolution for the settlement sector, which was adopted unanimously at the MANSO AGM in June 2021. A consultant was hired to

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conduct focus groups and a voluntary diversity audit of the settlement sector in Manitoba. An Anti-Racism Framework with a Collaborative Change Strategy was then developed.

**Survey.** A sector-wide survey was conducted to collect baseline data on the racial representation amongst staff, leadership, and board within the sector and provide some understanding of their lived experience with immigration, low-income or refugee status. 44 SPOs responded.

**Survey Results.**

- In the leadership
  - 75% reported that their leadership staff is white.
  
- Among staff
  - 32% reported lived experience as an immigrant, while only 9% had experience as a refugee.
  - 74% of small and medium-sized cities and urban organizations reported staff with experience living on a low income.
  
- For board membership
  - 57% of boards had some Indigenous board members, while 43% had none.
  - Racialized board members made up 20% or less of membership in 30% of agencies, 20-39% of the membership in 27% of agencies, 40-79% of the membership in 6% of agencies, and 80-100% of the membership in 2% of agencies.
  - 52% of boards reported having 60-100% white members (11% reporting all white board membership).
  - Like leadership, the highest representation of those identified as racialized were Black and South Asian.
  - 25% reported some of their board members had lived experiences as refugees, and 27% said some board members had an experience of precarious immigration status. In comparison, 84% had some members who had experience as immigrants.
  - 40% reported some of their board members have had lived experience on a low income.

**Framework's creation.** MANSO hired a consultant and consulted community members on the Framework's creation to

- ensure authenticity and meaningful engagement. The goal was to address racism and support racial inequality while avoiding being performative and tokenizing;
- see and name when actions, policies, or practices (unintentionally) support racism.

**MANSO Anti-racism Framework.** It is a tool to support MANSO members in collective learning, planning, and action to address systemic racism within their organizations, the sector, and beyond. While this framework invites collaborative work among MANSO members, it also offers guidance for individual Settlement Service Providers (SPOs).

**Core Commitments.** There are two streams within the Calls to Action.

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1. The core commitment is designed to prioritize ongoing learning, reflection, and cultural shifts that help support meaningful engagement and authenticity:
    - Call to Action 1: Commit to transforming workplace culture to one that actively supports.
    - Call to Action 2: Commit to ongoing learning about systemic racism and colonialism.
  2. The following are designed to support change:
    - Call to Action 3: Actively seek out, listen to, and act upon racialized staff and racialized communities' input.
    - Call to Action 4: Build robust and respectful relationships with ethnocultural communities.
    - Call to Action 5: Decolonize settlement work through collective, organizational, and individual means.
    - Call to Action 6: Create an environment where racialized staff and volunteers are welcomed and thriving.
    - Call to Action 7: Shift policy and practice to support anti-racism.
    - Call to Action 8: Develop diverse boards and governance practices that support anti-racism.
    - Call to Action 9: Advocate for system changes to dismantle racism and support anti-racism within the sector.

**Collective Implementation Strategy.** This Framework has been created to support collaborative learning and action in the Settlement Sector through an implementation model called Collective Implementation. In addition, MANSO selects small, medium, and large Settlement Service Providers to volunteer as Champions or Active Co-Learners each year.

**Champions.** They design and attempt actions that support the implementation of the Framework and share resources with Active Co-Learners as well as mistakes, failures and lessons learned. They also guide and advise the Active Co-Learners on accomplishing the Calls to Action. Champions respond to these Calls to Action by prioritizing ongoing learning, reflection, and cultural shifts that help support meaningful engagement and authenticity in all their efforts.

**Active Co-Learners.** Active Co-Learners are SPOs who regularly engage with and learn alongside the Champions. They may not be ready to engage with the Framework fully. However, they will sit with, witness, contribute to, and learn from the efforts of the Champions. At any point, Active Co-Learners can decide to plan and implement their actions to support the Framework based on the ideas, reflections, and learnings they have gained.

**Putting the Plan into Action.** It includes

- reviewing policies and protocols through an anti-racist lens;
- providing high-quality learning and PD opportunities on race and anti-racism;
- creating tools that disrupt racism.
- attracting and retaining people to engage those most impacted by racism and involve those with the power to make necessary changes.



## Question and Answer Period

- Q. What advice would you give SPOs to overcome their lack of knowledge and expertise in incorporating indigenous perspectives in service delivery?**
- A. Find Indigenous knowledge keepers and elders and find the funding to recognize their contribution.
- Q. What does MANSO do for organizations where leadership and boards do not match their clients? How can they diversify their leadership? What advice would you have to achieve diversification?**
- A. Engage with racialized newcomers and share leadership options and opportunities. Provide an incentive for people to engage initially. Recognition of impact is critical as well.
- Q. From a lived experience point of view, why is it essential to consider newcomers' and refugees' experiences separately? The same question applies to Indigenous people.**
- A. Skilled immigrants choose to come to Canada versus the refugees who are displaced. However, there is a preconception that the latest have less education, which is not necessarily true.  
Board representation rests on the recruitment process to onboarding. It must be a safe space. Umbrella organizations can help set the tone in that regard.
- Q. There is racism and bullying between our newcomer and Indigenous youth. Can you share tips to improve relationships between these two groups and foster a safe space for both?**
- A. Cultural safety must be embedded in all programming. Cultural brokering must occur at the beginning of all service delivery to foster good relationships.

## **Breakout Session. Navigating Cultural Differences: Creating Inclusion for Gender and Sexually Diverse Youth**

### Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

#### Presenter:

- Mateo Jumas, Training Centre Facilitator, Centre for Sexuality

The session is interactive.

**Background.** 15% of newcomers to Canada are gay or queer. There are 70 countries in the world where that would constitute a crime. Among newcomers, there is a demographic that requires support: gender and sexually diverse newcomer youth.

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**Definitions.**

- Sexual orientation is to whom we are attracted.
- Sexuality identity is how one identifies oneself and a sense of oneself.
- Gender expression is how we communicate that identity to the world (clothes, pronouns, verbal style, etc.)
- Gender expression norms have evolved throughout history.

**Brainstorming.** Why support gender and sexually diverse newcomers?

- To create community support
- To address intersectionality
- To fight racism and discrimination, including from SPOs
- To address bias, notably for SPOs
- To comply with human rights in Canada. Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation are protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code.

**Brainstorming.** What could be the challenges regarding service delivery to gender and sexually diverse newcomer youth?

- Cultural/personal values
- Small communities
- Lack of education/taboo in some cultures
- Lack of information/awareness
- Discomfort with talking about sexuality perceived through a narrow lens of intercourse

**Brainstorming.** What strategies can be used to navigate cultural differences within service provision?

- Be comfortable working with gender and sexually diverse newcomers.
- Hire people comfortable providing services to gender and sexually diverse newcomers.
- Respect Human Rights
- Safety, health, and well-being
- Community connections
- Advocacy and education
- Recognizing diversity in newcomer populations (race, ethnicity, ability, gender, sexuality)
- Communicate LGBTQ+ inclusion outwardly
- Develop LGBTQ+ immigrant-specific programs and committees
- Reflect on your own values and beliefs

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## Breakout Session. Examining The SWIS Model of Service through the Lens of Collaborative Case Management

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Presenter:

- Raghad Hussein, Research and Evaluation Specialist, CBFY

**CBFY.** The Calgary's Bridge Foundation for Youth (CBFY) has supported immigrant and refugee youth and their families with knowledge and information about Canadian culture and the schooling system since 1990.

CBFY primarily focuses on youth with some ten programs and serves roughly 30,000 youth annually. CBFY also have signed agreements with Calgary's public and catholic school boards to work with them.

**SWIS.** Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funds the Settlement Worker in Schools (SWIS) programs. Programs assist newcomers with services that support the transition into the school and community.

Programs may include information, outreach to families, needs assessment, service bridging, referrals, casework, cultural understanding, interpretation, home visits, non-therapeutic counselling, and community outreach.

**Scope of SWIS programs.** SWIS workers mobilize youth, parents, teachers, and service providers. They work directly in school settings. SWIS is a cross-component initiative that includes components under different settlement streams such as Service Provider Organizations (SPOs), Needs and Assets Assessment and Referrals Services (NAARS), Information and Orientation (I&O) and Community Connections (CC).

**Case Management.** Case management is a collaborative process that draws its framework from social services. It's a client-focused process which involves the assessment of needs, planning of services and inter and cross-agency collaborations to provide services to clients. IRCC has been encouraging the immigration sector to implement a case management approach to working with clients, especially high-need ones.

**Organization Needs and Competencies.** Case managers would need:

- Good communications skills
- Good knowledge of services map and navigation principles
- Collaborative skills coupled with a good professional network system
- Managerial skills
- A social work lens approach

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**The Five Steps of Case Management.** There are five core steps in the process, fluid and non-linear:

1. Intake and needs assessment
2. Service planning
3. Monitoring
4. Evaluation
1. Termination

**CBFY Case Management Practices.** Due to its partnerships, CBFY can get in touch with youth before them entering the school system upon arrival in Calgary. It includes to

1. obtain consent from youth and parents to serve them;
2. meet with youth in a community space or in school to start the case management process;
3. plan the service based on clients' needs, involving professional services and other SPOs;
4. monitor;
5. evaluate and terminate.

**Areas of youth needs.** CBFY has various programs to attend to clients' needs, such as conflict resolution and family dynamics, mental health, trauma, educational expectations (dealing with choice/pressure, etc.) and language.

**Case Management Process.** CBFY has recently implemented a case management structural approach to support newcomer youth and streamline internal processes. It lies in the clients' buy-in to be client-focused.

No one holds the title of case manager within the organization, but all staff apply the case management lens and model. It involves standardized forms, case management training, and case management committees.



### Question and Answer Period

**Q. How can a SWISS case manager engage in collaborative case management with government agencies such as child services due to legislation and privacy laws?**

A. Multiple consents are required in the case management process from youth and parents, schools, etc. Once a client's needs are assessed, it points the direction of the consent that must be obtained to serve the client better.

In addition, clarifying the SWIS role and intervention with government representatives helps to clarify cultural expectations and norms with all the parties involved.

**Q. Q. What does youth employment support look like?**

A. It involves youth employment workshops, field trips, volunteering, internship, mentoring and connecting with industries. Please email for more details.



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**Q. Can you elaborate on the case management tracking process and reporting into iCare?**

A. We use the OCASI Client Management System (OCMS). It is a paid website that can be used by multi-service agencies across Canada. It allows one to pull data on a client to see who worked with a client throughout the years and what programs the person had access to. Case Notes are also uploaded in the OCMS.

## Breakout Session. We Can't Pour from an Empty Cup!

### Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

#### Presenters:

- Amanda Pike, PBLA Lead & Instructor, ECSD LINC
- Diana Agudelo, Academic Coordinator, ECSD LINC

**Context.** Edmonton Catholic School (ECSD) began its wellness journey in 2010 and has prioritized wellness since then. ECSD LINC's wellness practices and activities exemplify various ways to promote wellness in the workplace. ECSD has had English as a Second Language Instruction (ESL) programs before but launched its LINC program in 1992. It has grown from a small program of a few classes to the second-largest LINC program in Edmonton, with 86 staff and 1600 students annually.

**Stressors.** Stressors may have always been there, but they have become more evident now. They include:

- Workforce exhaustion
- Unrealistic demands
- Organizational change
- Career and job ambiguity
- Increased numbers and needs of newcomers
- Higher caseloads
- Accelerated digitalization
- Lack of recognition
- Poor communication

**Wellness Project.** To help replenish and maintain the overall well-being of staff, ECSD LINC has implemented specific strategies and practices for instructors and non-instructor roles. These include:

- Designated collaboration spaces
- Ongoing teacher feedback on curriculum and scheduling
- Supports teachers with students onboarding
- An instructor reading club
- Inhouse PD
- Inhouse training and support for new hires

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**Outcomes.** As a result, the wellness journey

1. confirms to attendees that prioritizing wellness in the workplace for all staff is a win-win situation;
2. inspires attendees to go back to their organizations and have a conversation about wellness in the workplace, with some examples as a starting point;
3. exposes attendees to a variety of ways to promote wellness in the workplace;
4. lowers staff turnover, pre or post-COVID-19 pandemic.

**Best Practices.** They include:

1. Consultation to formally discuss ideas or projects with other members of the organization. Consultation ensures cooperation and allows stakeholders' ownership.
2. Student advisors (SA) meetings with the Program Manager to keep the person in the loop regarding issues or concerns. The SA also meet to share resources and information about agencies they liaise with in the city. Having student advisors onsite helps to alleviate the teacher's workload.
3. Focus groups and surveys.
4. Collaboration spaces allowing teachers to lean on their colleagues and learn from each other synchronously/asynchronously. They are "safe spaces" with a specific time and place. Collaboration occurs once a month. The teachers from all sites join colleagues at their respective levels and discuss topics, provide feedback on programming, and generally share ideas about things that work well in their classrooms.
5. Admin hours carving out time for instructors to check emails/Teams, attend meetings, update assessment trackers, complete attendance in the LINC App, fill out timesheets, and other administrative tasks.
6. Fostering diversity and inclusion. For example, literacy students participated in the creation of a collage. Each class collaborated to assemble the bulletin board and planned a full day of events.
7. Administrative weeks during which teachers participate in "Lightening Talks." They are short presentations that allow teachers to showcase something they do in the classroom, to share a website that works well in the classroom or expertise they have. It is so successful that teachers now request PD to be given in-house.

**Community Engagement.** Talking about wellness in the workplace is a combination of many things, but here are examples that can improve workplace culture:

- A Terry Fox Walk with the participation of both students and staff. Students learn about a Canadian Hero and donate to "Toonies for Terry." This inspires students and fulfills a major settlement piece in helping students understand through experience what it feels like to be part of a larger community here in Canada.

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- Clean-up day involves students and staff during the spring and fall sessions.
  - A new initiative involved a reverse advent calendar. Staff followed a calendar that noted greatly needed Food Bank items for each day leading up to Christmas. Such an effort creates warmth among staff, and all those "feel good feelings" also trickle down to the students.
  - During a recent Wellness Day, one site spent the day working with a local charity that builds beds for families in need. Being part of a team effort can positively impact children's health.

## Breakout Session. Newcomer Youth Empowerment & Engagement: Moving Beyond the Buzzword

### Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

#### Presenter:

- Oliver Kamau, Director of Programs, EISA

**Definition.** Youth engagement is the concept and practice of meaningfully engaging youth in decisions that affect them, their peers, and their communities. It is about adults and youth working together as equal partners to make decisions and create change. Everything done for newcomer youth should be done by and with newcomer youth.

**Challenge.** Youth empowerment is a concept that has been widely used in society as an instrument of social policy and program implementation in addressing and influencing youth, especially in the adolescent phase. Unfortunately, the concept has generally been co-opted as a buzzword for different youth programming activities, often without clarity of how it should be understood or measured.

**Rationale.** Young people are generally more effective than adults at understanding the needs of their peers. Young people often have an openness and willingness to take risks. Youth can be visionaries when given a chance. Their involvement increases understanding of the needs of youth by adults.

#### **Characteristics of Meaningful Youth Engagement.**

- Opportunities for skill development and capacity building.
- Leadership opportunities.
- Reflection on identity to talk about who they are.
- Development of social awareness.
- Mutual ownership and collaboration in program development and evaluation.
- Organizational support.
- Celebration of achievable goals/milestones. Progress is seen and recognized.

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## Benefits of Youth Engagement.

### For Youth

- Recognize that everyone has value and has a voice, including youth.
- Give back to their community.
- Build self-esteem and develop leadership and problem-solving skills.
- Break down generational barriers between youth and adults.
- Develop skills and knowledge that support the transition to adulthood and independence.

### For Organizations

- Greater knowledge, skills, and creativity become available.
- Improved quality and effectiveness of policies, programs, and services.
- Ability to make more informed decisions that will help meet the youth's needs.
- Greater transparency and accountability.

## Practical Strategies for Youth Engagement.

- Recruit and engage youth from various backgrounds without focusing on the hard-to-reach/disadvantaged youth.
- Get the word out and raise awareness about opportunities to get involved.
- Empower youth by giving them opportunities to voice their opinions and follow their interest with the support of adult mentors.
- Promote democratic participation, including the freedom to disagree, dissent and offer a different opinion.
- Train and support youth participating in engagement activities.
- Build partnerships and nourish youth engagement champions.

**Edmonton Case.** There are two youth networks composed of 7 organizations dedicated to youth. The PowerPoint presentation that will be shared provides more details, including A Newcomer Youth Service Map.



### Question and Answer Period

**Q. Our neighbourhood is impacted by gang violence, and it impacts newcomer youth. How can we address this issue?**

A. A thesis has been written on this very topic.

Integrating families in the intervention process is essential as the youth's primary support system. Schools also have a part to play. The justice system also plays a role. It is beneficial when we benefit from their community engagement in the intervention process. They talk to parents about best practices, consequences, and such.

We must focus on this to make youth feel safe and included. It requires a multi-facet approach that does not only rely on governments. Faith-based organizations can also help.

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## Day 1. February 27th, 2023, P.M.

### Breakout Session. Surviving or Thriving? What It Takes for Refugees to Succeed

#### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

##### Presenter:

- Md Abdullah Al Mamun Patwary, Team Leader, Resettlement Assistance Program, SODS

**RAP Program.** The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) has two main components: income support and assistance for immediate essential services. Immediate and essential services are delivered within the first 4-6 weeks of a newcomer's arrival in Canada.

##### **RAP Activities.** Activities include

- meeting newcomers at the airport;
- providing temporary accommodation;
- providing basic orientation to Canada, life skills training, and financial orientation;
- interpreting and translating;
- assisting in finding permanent housing;
- referring to other settlement programs.

##### **Housing Challenges.** Refugees struggle with

- finding affordable housing leading to sub-standard living conditions;
- navigating the housing system involving multiple partners and complex processes;
- renting due to discrimination of certain nationalities;
- financial worries that overshadow other settlement requirements;
- food insecurity and malnourishment;
- language barriers due to limited English skills and/or limited literacy skills preventing access to LINC programs as is;
- access to services for refugees with disabilities in the current settlement and integration pathway.

##### **Health Challenges.** Refugees experience several barriers, such as

- challenges in communicating with health providers leading to wrong diagnostics and unnecessary medical treatments
- longer delays accessing health services, especially specialists. For example, an initial health assessment can take months to be scheduled
- struggle to access and navigate the health system leading to unnecessary calls to 911.
- post-traumatic health disorder (PTSD) and limited access to support
- limited access to mental health services
- lack of emergency doctors in hospitals. In Saskatoon, people must wait 3 to 7 hours in the emergency room before seeing someone. Refugees report discrimination leading to increased waiting time

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**Recommendations.** Improving refugees' situation would require to

1. hire more doctors and health professionals;
2. provide culturally appropriate care;
3. speed up the health card application process, currently taking 2 to 6 months;
4. provide better health insurance coverage for refugees;
5. Provide SPOs access to refugees outside of regular office hours and workdays -night and weekend emergencies are hard to address;
6. make food tickets available more broadly;
7. rethink LINC classes for
  - a) low literacy skills refugees unable to learn in the current format, and
  - b) trade workers who need specialized English language skills to integrate the job market in their trade;
8. rethink LARC assessment for people with disability;
9. mitigate cultural shock and homesickness;
10. develop resources for refugees in multiple languages detailing settlement system navigation and access to services;
11. Add professional development for SPOs' new employees and staff in working with refugees;
12. adopt a common database by all the Saskatoon SPOs to access information related to refugees and avoid duplication of intake forms and data entry.

## Breakout Session. Confessions of an ED

Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

Presenters:

- Edith Montesclaros
- Icasiana de Gala, Executive Director, Southwest Newcomer Welcome Centre
- Janine Hart, Executive Director, HRNC

This presentation is an open discussion opened with spoken poetry presenting some of the struggles executive directors (ED) face in small centers.



### Question and Answer

**Q. Can you share the positive of the ED role? What would you share with someone transitioning into an ED role?**

- A. IRCC is open to supporting small centers by increasing staffing capacity. However, it can be challenging if there is no middle management and 12 people reporting directly to the ED. There is also a need to push for ED wellness since many are women.

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### **Challenges of Being an ED in a Small Center.**

- The organization is reduced to the identity of one person, usually the ED.
- ED with no HR background take on increasing staff management.
- There is no middle management.
- Small centers usually have only one settlement service organization doing it all.
- It is a lonely position.

### **The Perks of Being an ED in a Small Center.**

- There is a lot of room to be an agent of change.
- The ED holds an influential position.
- The need for partnerships is greater, and service delivery rests on their strength.

### **Needs of ED in a Small Center.**

- To have associate ED share the load.
- To build middle management.
- Increase staff retention.

### **Diversity of Small centers.** Small centers and the region they cover can vary.

The Southwest Newcomer Welcome Centre is based in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. The town is 16000 strong, but the SPO also covers the south of Saskatchewan. There are lots of communities to serve under a 200 km radius. There are 11 staff, and they can offer the HIPPY program. Retention is a challenge. They lost four people last year to bigger centers, often for better salaries.

The East Central Newcomer Welcome Centre Inc. is based in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, which is 18000 strong. The biggest town around is Melville with 5000 inhabitants. The service area covers a 150 km radius zone around Yorkton. There are two school divisions. Four staff members left a few weeks apart last year as well.

The Humboldt Regional Newcomer Welcome Centre is based in Humbolt. There are 6500 inhabitants, and they have a SWIS program and two SWIS workers. They serve isolated rural communities of a few hundred people. They have good staff retention. They do lots of staff activities to bound and retain employees.

## **Breakout Session. Province-Wide Online Language Model: Innovation in Referral and Online Delivery**

### Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

This session contains three presentations.

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## The Provincial Online Pilot (POM)

### Presenter:

- Renée Barnabé, Supervisor, Small Centers, IRCC Settlement

The content was already presented last year.

**Background.** The COVID-19 pandemic hit Canada in March 2020. As a result, language training courses shifted to online delivery, and waitlists increased across the PNT region in Fall 2020 / Winter 2021. Some language providers had empty seats, while others had waitlists, representing an opportunity. Online delivery of language training provided a unique opportunity to refer students from across each province to online classes with empty seats.

**Pilot Description.** In January 2021 PNT Language Team introduced the pilot idea to the sector. Provincial Online Pilot was launched in April 2021. A mix of small centres and urban language providers participated. Select online classes were made available to students from across their respective provinces. LARCs were heavily involved as they managed referrals. In addition, laptop lending libraries were funded for pilot students through LARCs or within individual service provider agreements.

**Specifications.** 11 service providers were selected across PNT:

- Four providers in Alberta: Agape Language Learning Centre, Bredin Centre for Learning, Columbia Training Centre, and The Board of Trustees of Edmonton School District No. 7 (Edmonton Public)
- Four providers in Saskatchewan: Carlton Trail College, North West College, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and the University of Regina
- Three providers in Manitoba: Regional Connections, Red River College, and YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg

**Pilot Review.** The pilot ran for approximately a year and a half, from April 2021 until the summer of 2022. The PNT Language Team will review occupancy and enrollment for pilot classes versus all classes, waitlist trends and comparison with landings, and feedback on the pilot and online delivery of language training.

Even though there was no formal evaluation of the pilot, the language assessment centres, the language coordinators of the umbrella organizations, the language sector in PNT, and the LINC administrators and instructors from pilot participants shared their feedback.

### Positive feedback

- Most providers and LARCs indicated that referrals flowed smoothly.
- Pilot classes have helped reduce high wait lists in urban centres.
- Pilot classes have helped increase occupancy and enrolment in smaller communities where filling seats can be challenging.
- Access to laptop lending libraries has been crucial to success.



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- Clients in small centres far from a language service provider have taken advantage of these classes.
  - The curriculum for pilot classes was very similar to other classes. However, some instructors modified lesson plans to make content more "general" and less specific to their city or area. Also, instructors took advantage of having students from different regions of the province to share and learn about other places.

#### Feedback on challenges

- Digital literacy is a concern with all online delivery. It can be even more difficult if a student cannot attend an initial in-person visit with the language provider.
- Some providers are concerned that clients in their area might sign up for an online class delivered by an organization elsewhere in the province, making it harder for them to serve their community and meet targets.
- Online delivery can be challenging for literacy and low CLB levels, and not all service providers have been successful with virtual classes at those levels.
- Turnover was high, especially when spots for in-person classes started to open up.
- Service providers indicated an increased need for professional development to provide better online delivery.

#### Online Delivery of Language Training

- Although online/blended classes existed before March 2020, online delivery increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Language providers pivoted quickly to online delivery.
- There is still research to be done on the following:
  - Effectiveness of online delivery of LINC
  - Best uses for online delivery (CLB levels, class type, learner type)
  - Continued demand for virtual language classes
  - The sector needs the continued delivery of online classes (professional development, technology, digital literacy supports, etc.)
  - Cost-effectiveness

In collaboration with Red River College, the PNT region also funded a study through Norquest College to obtain feedback on the Emergency Delivery of online language training.

#### **POM Potential.**

- Help manage unexpected surges of newcomers requiring language training.
- Make niche language training (ex: employment specific) for more students.
- Increase collaboration between LARCs and language providers.
- Assist in creating standards for online learning to align with or improve PBLA.

#### **POM Limitations.**

- Language providers are concerned with losing students to bigger schools with more capacity.

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- Referrals between provinces may be explored; however, specific funding allocations must be considered.
  - More research is needed to determine the actual cost of online language delivery.
  - Digital literacy continues to be an issue for all online language delivery.
  - Resources such as lending libraries may still be required and will need replenishing.
  - Providers indicate more professional development to improve online delivery is needed.

#### **PNT Language Team Recommendations.**

- Removing pilot status from this model
- Using this online province-wide method of delivery for the remainder of the agreement cycle
- Allowing new language providers to participate
- In each province, running at least one class for every 2 levels and increasing as required based on demand: CLB 1/2, CLB 3/4, CLB 5/6, CLB 7/8

**Parameters.** Language providers will need to be selected to deliver Online Province Wide classes. Lesson topics must be non-specific to a city or area, as students from all over the province may attend. These classes must be online only (no blended or hybrid). Although not all online courses will be accessible to students across the province, a set number of classes will be flagged by PNT as Online Province Wide (OPW). PNT will work with LARCs and LINC providers to increase or decrease the number of OPW classes based on need.

#### **Provincial Online Model at Centre for Newcomers**

Presenter:

- Charlie Wang, Chief Client Services Officer, CFN

The presentation illustrates the pilot with a concrete example led by the Centre for Newcomers (CFN).

**Model Presentation.** The Provincial Online Model (POM) is a LINC class model which allows students from anywhere in the province to attend the class online. At CFN, classes are offered in the mornings, from 9 A.M. to 12 P.M., Monday to Friday, part-time. Classes have 25 seats, which remained full since the second week of classes. There are currently 30 students on the waitlist for this class.

The class follows the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA) guidelines, primarily using Avenue.ca to fulfill these goals. This platform allows students to move out while maintaining some learning continuity, as switching learning platforms is unnecessary.

**Background.** The pandemic showed the need for more flexibility in class delivery. Online learning became the norm due to the pandemic. Proximity to school became a non-issue for clients. With

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the transition back to in-person learning, online options remain necessary to address transportation and accessibility issues. It was especially true for students outside big centres or rural areas.

**Program Details.** In October 2022, the CFN LINC program launched its first Provincial Online Class. An effort was made to promote the class by contacting assessment referral centers across Alberta, contacting waitlisted students, and updating the Center for Newcomers' website. As a result, the POM class reaches full enrollment within the first two weeks. The occupancy rate remained over 90% from November 2022 to January 2023. As of January 2023, nine SPOs offer POM in Alberta, covering levels 1-2 to 7-8.

**Geographical Distribution.** Current students live in Calgary, Edmonton, Chestermere, and Red Deer. 1 of 3 people on the waitlist lives outside of the Calgary area (Edmonton, Grand Prairie, Lacombe, Medicine Hat, Willingdon, and Winfield). 50% of the students on the waitlist living in Calgary are outside the northeast area of CFN.

**Online Learning Challenges.** To mitigate challenges, CFN took several measures:

- Technology orientation sessions are offered during the program's first week to assist students.
- Laptops are loaned upon request for those living near or in Calgary.
- POM teacher also meets students in person at the CFN building for those who live in Calgary to demonstrate how to use their computer for class.

**Recommendations.** Having higher-level classes (CLB 3+) seems appropriate. Minimal technology skills are essential to use and navigate Zoom, MS Teams and Avenue.ca, an essential part of the learning environment. The POM can bridge the services gap for rural and small towns clients.

### The perspective of an Assessment Center in Saskatchewan

Presenter:

- Jessica Stark, Newcomer and Language Assessment Program Manager, IWS

The presentation offers a perspective of an assessment center in Saskatchewan. Since February 2022, Immigrant Women of Saskatoon (IWS) has been responsible for all the referrals to POM classes in the province, representing 600 students' referrals to online classes.

**Benefits.**

- Better utilization of seats was achieved from the beginning of the program, as most POM seats were filled with waitlisted students. 60% of clients chose POM because of the shorter waitlist.

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- Greater integration between rural and urban agencies from the assessment point of view. They collaborated to offer the best POM schedule in the province. It helps with relationship building between SPOs.
  - Clients were better connected to various services.
  - POM classes filled gaps in current programming for language, such as CLB online classes level 5 and 6 in the evening, especially in Regina. CLB 1-2 classes are also available five days a week, and daytime classes for CLB 5-6 are also available three times a week. Overall, it provided more variety in terms of schedule options.
  - It greatly benefited working clients or those who needed evening classes due to other commitments or family engagements. Ten out of 15 POM classes available in Saskatchewan are evening classes. All of them are full.

Some 35% of POM classes participants are employed, and 54% are actively looking for jobs. In addition, 77% of all POM participants live in a household of 3 or more people, which suggests that POM clients have families and children.

### Challenges.

- The initial fear was that POM would divert clients from the current class offering in urban centers. However, only 10% of the referral over the past year has been to the POM classes. They also make up for roughly 10% of all the class options available to clients in Saskatchewan.
- CLB5-6 evening class is very popular, and the waitlist is growing, which is the opposite of the POM intent. There are currently 36 people on the waitlist for that class, plus 12 people referred to that class.
- POM classes are primarily occupied by urban clients in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon.



### Question and Answer Period

#### **Q. How do you measure occupancy for an asynchronous class?**

A. It is trackable through Avenue.ca. The interactive learning objects that clients do also allow measurements. The software tracks the time they spend on these objects.

#### **Q. How many students were ideal for your CLB 5-6 classes?**

A. 15 occupancy spots. It was a good balance for the time we had to teach, our admin support, and optimizing learning outcomes, participation, and retention.

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**Q. What is the plan for POM in the next contribution agreement (CA)? Will it be available for SPOs in the provinces?**

A. As IRCC is preparing for the next CFP, they are still exploring what it will look like. If SPOs are interested in the current CA, they should speak to their IRCC officers.

**Q. Regarding laptop loaning programs, do each SPOs manage it, or is there a loaning library or something else?**

A. IRCC did both with landing libraries available through LARCS programs at the assessment level. We also had landing libraries in specific SPOs. Acquiring IT material is one thing, but maintaining and taking care of it requires a lot over time. Reaching out to the community might be a way to acquire more IT equipment outside the IRCC-funded resources.

## Breakout Session. Supporting Newcomer Youth with Wrap-around Services and Addressing System Gaps Through Partnerships

### Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

#### Presenters:

- Carolee Turner, Local/Regional Partnership Coordinator, CFN
- Noël Bahliby, Manager, Youth Programs, CFN

This presentation is based on a real-life story of a youth newcomer who came to Canada and experienced various challenges that led the person to crime.

**Real ME Program.** It is an identity-based intervention initiative for first and second-generation newcomer youth aged 12 to 24 and considered high risk for criminal or gang involvement. Half the youth CFN supports this category, including citizens. Partnerships with the municipality have helped serve this part of the clientele.

**Clientele.** Talking about "high risk" includes

1. youth showing delinquency in the classroom, fighting a lot, not communicating well with teachers and adults, showing high-risk behaviours, and skipping classes;
2. youth engaging in assault, theft, and possession of prohibited weapons. They have been in the justice system, experienced juvenile detention and been charged with serious crimes (drug dealing, organized crime).

**Goal.** CFN aims to address attitudes toward criminality based on the assumption that youth use crime to solve their problems, such as lack of money, belonging, etc. The goal is to make them understand the risks of their chosen path.

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**Definition.** “Third-culture kids” is the term used to refer to youth that is not fully part of their parents' or Canadian culture while growing up in Canada. As a result, they experience peer pressure differently than other youth.

**Story of Ali.** While the story is fictional, it is inspired by true events. All names, dates, and locations have been changed.

Ali is a young boy, the second oldest in his family who owns a bakery in Syria. In 2011, the Arab Spring starts, and protests come to Syria. One day, a bomb hit Ali's house. His house is destroyed, the shop is looted, and his brother goes missing. The parents flee to a refugee camp in Jordan, where the family is warmly welcomed. However, a few months pass, and the life quality in the camp degrades due to the increased number of refugees.

The family decides to leave for another refugee camp. With smugglers' help, they end up in Turkey. They spend the last of their money on the trip. They start making and selling bread, and Ali skips school to help sell it. He is good at it. Finally, after five years of displacement, the family is accepted to Canada.

They land in Brampton, Manitoba, by minus 30 degrees Celsius. Ali is excited to be in a safer place with food. However, he soon starts to feel different and isolated. He is placed in grade 8 but has missed three years of schooling. He feels envious of his younger siblings, who are learning English faster. He starts to be bullied in school because of his refugee status. He is called a spy

for ISIS, a secret terrorist. Ali starts to resent school and skips classes.

In the meantime, his parents can't find employment and move to Winnipeg. There, Ali meets other Syrian refugees in school. But Ali's father gets into an accident and is placed on disability without fully benefiting from it due to his limited English skills. His mother is also diagnosed with a disease and can no longer work. So, Ali starts taking odd jobs at \$11/hour. He gets a second and a third job.

Eventually, he meets a cousin, Youssef, who seems to be doing very well, money-wise. Youssef brings him into the drug dealing business and shows him the ropes. After six months, he has saved \$15,000 dealing drugs.

Unfortunately, he is caught at 17, and a few more times later, he gets sentenced to 5 years in prison. His parents find out about his justice system involvement.

In prison, he reflects on what led him there: desperation, the need to tend to his family's needs, etc.

**Settlement Perspective.** There are gaps in Ali's integration journey with the settlement services. However, Ali's story shows that most at-risk youths experience some disruption that leads them to crime due to increased vulnerability.

In Alberta, First Nation youth involved with the justice system benefit from a program that led to a 360 degrees evaluation of the circumstances that led them to crime. But unfortunately, there is nothing similar for newcomer youth.

**Integration.** Mental Health, settlement, education, employment, and justice systems must better collaborate to address newcomer youth needs. System gaps could be addressed by listening to youth. Settlement is most of the time focusing on parents. It is essential to consider the settlement process's impact on youth and what could go wrong.

Newcomer youth is diverse: it includes international students, temporary workers, and undocumented children, all of which are not eligible to receive IRCC-funded services. Also, it is important to adopt a proactive approach with each wave of refugees to avoid seeing their youth ending up in the justice system five years after arrival on Canadian soil.

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**Obstacles.** Understanding legislation is key to assessing the situation and risk. SWIS workers should be taught and trained to address their biases.



### Question and Answer Period

**Q. How do we support the school system?**

A. Training with teachers, principals and school staff can help. One of the most popular workshops was "Everything you ever wanted to ask but were afraid to because you would look racist." Compulsory culturally responsive training should be a component of school staff education.

The WRAPCAP project tries to address this gap. The University of Calgary, at the Faculty of Education, has made it mandatory for all future teachers. Empowering SWIS workers is also key to playing their part as cultural brokers.

**Q. What training are SWIS workers currently required to work with high-need youth?**

A. We learn from the WRAPCAP project that they get the training they deserve, as they are not seen as a profession. For example, ESWIS workers get risk-assessment training but not SWIS workers. Risk-assessment training, conflict de-escalation training, mental health training, and immigration processes training are all recommended for SWIS workers.

## **Breakout Session. IRCC funded settlement hotels across the prairies: challenges and successes in the delivery of federal temporary accommodation programs in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba**

### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Presenters:

- Emily Halldorson, Ukraine Response Coordinator, MANSO
- Lisa de Gara, Manager, Small Centres, AHC
- Lyudmyla Pastushenko, Team Leader of Settlement and Family Support, SODS
- Suraj Khatiwada, Program Lead, Settlement and Integration, AHC

This session includes three presentations featuring each province's response to IRCC-funded settlement hotels across the prairies.

**Context.** Many Ukrainians arriving in Canada have no prior connections here. As part of the National Operation for Ukrainian Safe Haven, IRCC funds settlement hotels in several cities, including Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg.

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## In Alberta

### **Just How Safe is this Haven if We Can't Eat Breakfast? Challenges and Difficulties in Supporting Ukrainian Arrivals at the Edmonton Settlement Hotel**

**AHC.** Action for Healthy Communities (AHC) is a newcomer-serving organization funded by IRCC and offering 100% free services to families, community organizations, and/or businesses. Clients are immigrants and refugees to Canada, including children and youth in schools.

**CUAET Context.** Canada-Ukrainian Authorization for Emergency Transit (CUAET) is a 3-year limited visa for Ukrainians fleeing the war. Still, it does not give them refugee status and, thus, no refugee benefits. They are not permanent residents upon arrival.

**Data.** As of February 16, 2023,

- 862,386 applications had been submitted through CUAET.
- 559,868 applications have been approved (total approval rate upon review: 99%).
- 175,000 Ukrainians had arrived in Canada.
- Approximately 22,000 Ukrainians had arrived in Alberta.

Around 250 CUAET visa holders arrive in Edmonton weekly. In Edmonton, they are not met at the airport.

**Specificity.** Ukrainian arrivals are not government coordinated. CUAET visa holders arrive on commercial flights that they have paid for themselves. As a result, they would unlikely arrive directly from Ukraine. Many come from Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, and Italy. It is thus impossible to look at flight manifests and predict arrivals. Most CUAET holders do not necessarily have any government or settlement connection upon arrival in Canada.

**Hotels.** IRCC offers federally funded “settlement hotels” for up to 14 nights. Hotel cost is paid through IRCC but only covers accommodation. This plan is intended for CUAET arrivals who come to Edmonton with nowhere to go/no permanent housing plan or host. In Edmonton, 25 double-occupancy rooms are available at the Comfort Inn and Suites in downtown Edmonton. The hotel has more rooms than this, but IRCC does not cover them.

**Collaboration.** In November 2022, IRCC partnered with AHC and Catholic Social Services (CSS) to manage the settlement hotel. The SPO connects with arrivals when they land at Edmonton International Airport, confirms that they are eligible to stay at the hotel and connects arrivals with IRCC to confirm the registration.

AHC is a settlement partner that provides services within the hotel (SIN numbers, banking and financial assistance support, health cards, housing, education, etc.). Since launching, more than 350 people have stayed at the hotel. AHC also collect resources from the community to provide them with extra support.



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**Logistical Challenges.** There are a few around:

1. Housing Crisis. As of February 16, 2023,
  - Calgary has received 10581 CUAET holders, or 47.09% of Alberta's total.
  - Edmonton has received 7101 CUAET holders, or 31.60% of Alberta's total.
  - Calgary has 75 rooms available, occupancy of 150.
  - Edmonton has 25 rooms available, occupancy of 50.

As a result, at least 20 people are turned away daily due to lack of space: more often, 30-40 CUAET holders.

2. Transportation to the hotel. Taxi from the airport to the hotel is approximately \$60. IRCC will not allow settlement agencies to use their client transportation funding to get them to the hotel.
3. Food. IRCC does not cover food for hotel residents. AHC has secured donations and support to cover food-related expenses (around \$20,000), but the cost per person per day is approximately \$50. So, with 50 people times 25 rooms, \$1,250 are needed daily to feed the people. Monthly food costs can go up to \$37,500.

## In Saskatchewan

### **IRCC funded settlement hotel: challenges and successes in the delivery of federal temporary accommodation program in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**

**SODS.** Saskatoon Open Door Society (SODS) assists newcomers to Canada to become participating members of an inclusive and diverse community and country. SODS collaborates with Global Gathering Place (GGP), Saskatchewan Intercultural Association and International Women of Saskatoon (IWS) to help settle and integrate Ukrainian arrivals.

**Hotels.** The program started on Oct 24th, 2022. It includes 25 rooms at the Quality Inn and Suites in Saskatoon. The city only has a domestic airport. There is little information at the airport about the program. Some Ukrainian arrivals do not speak English. 36 families and 86 people are currently staying at the hotel, and there are vacancies.

**Challenges.** There is no funding available for transportation to the hotel. SODS covers bus tickets for the first two weeks after arrival. The same goes for food. The limited number of affordable housings makes it hard for newcomers to find accommodation. Ukrainian arrivals must undergo a health exam, which costs \$300 per person upon arrival. It is not covered by insurance or any funding. Families with children can ask for Child support benefits when employed, but they lose the benefits as soon as they enter the workforce, often on survival jobs.

**Takeaways.** IRCC funding hotel is a promising practice that would be worth broadening.

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## In Manitoba

**Context.** The model is complex in Manitoba due to the high involvement of the provincial government. The province has created a temporary accommodation program itself. They offer hotel accommodation for up to 30 days, meals included. The Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO) ensured that information about programs and services was available at the airport.

The QR code at the airport directs newcomers to Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc., who then place them in the provincially funded hotels. The SPO also provides newcomers with free programs and services, including settlement, employment, language, and translation.

**Data.** From April 19, 2022, to February 18, 2023, 13,210 Ukrainian nationals registered with Manitoba Health, representing 12% of all Ukrainian arrivals in Canada. Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc serves around 4000 Ukrainian newcomers. Ukrainian arrivals usually stay in provincially funded hotels for the entire 30-day stay period. After that, they are given resources to find other accommodation. Finally, they can communicate with a settlement coordinator who will assess their eligibility for different housing programs, including IRCC-funded hotels.

**IRCC Funded Hotels.** There are two hotels downtown Winnipeg: the ALT and the Fairfield, close to the airport. They offer 15 rooms total, and there is a waiting list. If eligible, Ukrainian newcomers can stay up to 15 days. Most newcomers use provincially and federally funded accommodations while waiting to access an already-found permanent accommodation. IRCC-funded hotels are a way to extend their stay by 15 days after they have exhausted their 30 days in the provincially funded program. The program started in November 2022, and 430 families have stayed in IRCC-funded hotels since then.

**New Journey Housing.** The program provides housing support for Ukrainians, including

- how to find and apply for housing;
- referrals to landlords;
- set viewing for apartments;
- provide support letters for housing applications;
- help with translation.

Welcome Place also supports those who want to settle in rural communities.



## Question and Answer Period

**Q. What hotel accommodations are available in small rural communities? Can we create a model to subsidize hotels in small communities?**

A. In Alberta, the model prioritizes urban arrivals due to the presence of the airport. Rural communities are even less equipped to accommodate massive arrivals and vulnerable

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newcomers, including the ones with limited English skills. For example, transportation from airports to rural communities could be a challenge.

In Manitoba, few Ukrainian newcomers heard about jobs outside Winnipeg during their hotel stay. However, the province has been flexible under their temporary housing programs for newcomers with reliable job prospects in rural communities. The province has then supported a limited stay in a hotel in a rural community. Local SPOs can then support them for settlement and integration purposes. Welcome Place also does exploratory visits to rural communities to give Ukrainian newcomers options outside of Winnipeg.

Saskatchewan only has IRCC-funded hotel rooms in Saskatoon, the province's biggest city.

**Q. How can a temporary accommodation that meets the needs of vulnerable Ukrainians be made available in all the host communities? Why is there a difference in stay duration between 30 and 15 days?**

- A. The 30 days are accessible through a Government of Manitoba-funded program. It is different from the IRCC-funded program, which is a 14-day program. In Manitoba, Ukrainian newcomers may access both if eligible and in need. IRCC and the provincial government worked together to modify and adapt the federal program to the provincial context to maximize support.

**Q. Q. Is there any support beyond the IRCC-funded hotels in Alberta and Saskatchewan to support Ukrainian newcomers after their initial 15-day stay? Do they have to rely only on the private market?**

- A. Action for Healthy Communities (AHC) partnered with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in Edmonton. They had 79 units available for Ukrainian newcomers and are now full. There is talk about rent subsidies. However, these housing challenges are universal across all newcomer groups and the Canadian population. The scale of the Ukrainian arrivals adds to these challenges.

In Saskatoon, SODS collaborates with the Saskatoon Housing Authorities. They have affordable housing options but are limited and subject to existing waiting lists. There is also no emergency application process. The Saskatoon Branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) has helped host families in private houses at the beginning of the Ukrainian arrivals wave. It is not a sustainable solution in the long term, though.

## Breakout Session. Urban Transformation and Francophone Pathways

### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Presenter:

- Yann Legrand, Assistant Director, IRCC

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**CFP 2019 Vision.** The vision stems from the desire to modernize service delivery for the settlement sector to serve clients better. It involved the following.

- Centralization or Standardization of Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARS). In this case, centralized meant that one SPO would conduct NAARS and then refer clients to other SPOs. Again, it aimed to avoid variation in need assessment by various SPOs.
- Standardization of the assessment so several providers conducting NAARS would use a consistent approach throughout a city or a region.
- A “ZONE approach” came up before CFP 2019 following a study showing that 30 to 40% only of newcomers were accessing settlement services. Services must also be close to where clients live to allow extensive outreach work and an expansive referral approach.
- Case Management beyond the current national approach and awareness around a practice that had been around for a long time. Naming the practice allows IRCC to have a level-based approach to help identify and forecast the level of need and funding required for Case Management. The goal was also to serve clients beyond the Government assisted refugees (GARs) and standardize the Case Management triage approach.
- Welcome Apps and Welcome Orientations tie up with the outreach work aiming at 100% awareness of settlement services by newcomers if not 100% use.

**Francophone Partnerships.** Francophone clients must be able to access services of the same quality across a province or a region. Urban transformation is a way to implement systemic referrals and collaboration between SPOs to strengthen the Francophone pathways. Clients must be given the option to choose to get their NAARS in English or French. Also, they must be informed that the Francophone communities exist.

**ZONE.** There are two components to ZONE.

1. Outreach to increase awareness of settlement services.
  - ZONE SPOs are funded with ZONE workers for outreach purposes.
  - ZONE SPOs are to develop a recipient-specific plan to improve client access to settlement services and provide progress reports on their ZONE Outreach and Referral findings twice a year.
2. Referral of clients.
  - Centralized NAARS: ZONE SPOs are responsible for providing settlement services to the clients referred by Centralized SPOs and for referring the clients to Specialized Service Providers.
  - Standardized NAARS: Each ZONE SPO can self-refer or refer the clients to other ZONE SPOs based on the client’s preferences and needs. For any specialized services that the ZONE SPO doesn’t offer, ZONE SPO is responsible for referring the clients to Specialized Service Providers.

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**Case Management.** Level definitions (2 to 4) were transmitted to SPOs in 2020. The case management group has developed a case management triage tool, which will soon be piloted. Local monthly consultations related to case management also started in January 2023. SPOs now chair ongoing quarterly case management meetings. SPOs doing case management from small centers were paired with urban SPOs for mentoring purposes.

**Welcome App.** All main cities have their free Welcome App available on Apple and Android. “Welcome to Alberta” covers Calgary and Edmonton. “Welcome to Saskatchewan” covers Regina and Saskatoon. “Arrival Advisor” focuses on Winnipeg.

They are subject to constant updates to add languages and resources. They could be used, for example, to promote small centers and rural cities. Francophone realities must also be reflected in these apps.

**Francophone Integration Pathway.** This project started in 2018 with Heritage Canada and the Official Language Action Plan. It aims to facilitate linkages between French-speaking newcomers and Francophone communities and strengthen the delivery of quality settlement services by and for Francophones. The Francophone Integration Pathway provides detailed information so all newcomers can make informed decisions about their settlement and integration.

**Outcomes.** Francophone Integration Pathway achieves the following outcomes.

- Increase in SPOs in the PTN region following the 2019 CFP; improved and adapted settlement services; more services have been available for French-speaking newcomers, such as SWIS in Francophone schools or the equivalent of LINC in French.
- Increase in funding for Francophone SPOs by 20% compared to before CFP 2019
- Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative that supports targeted communities across Canada.
- Enhanced Support for the Francophone settlement sector
- Annual forum that brings together Francophone SPOs from the PTN region to discuss successes and challenges and enjoy a networking opportunity.



### Question and Answer Period

**Q. As we finish the 3rd year of our 5-year contribution agreement, is there any increase in how many clients access settlement services?**

A. IRCC is still pulling iCare data. Plus, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted service delivery. 2021-2022 shows a record high of permanent resident arrivals.

**Q. Is there a way to integrate the Welcome Apps with the Canoe app? For example, many newcomers would get the Canoe app for free access to entrainment and recreation activities. Could IRCC facilitate that?**

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- A. It is a good idea. I invite participants to email IRCC on the topic.
- Q. The model of centralized NAARS is the same across the provinces. Did IRCC notice if specific systems perform better than others or have a more significant impact? Is IRCC going to recommend a certain system for CFP 2024?**
- A. Some cities work well in a standardized or centralized system. The biggest step is ensuring the form is consistent before we entertain long-term changes.
- Q. What have we learned about the implementation of IRCC urban transformation so far? Are there any plans to formally evaluate this approach before CFP 2024?**
- A. IRCC would have liked that, but it would be challenging before CFP 2024. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the approach implementation. Having good data is critical before evaluating.
- Q. How do centralized NAARS numbers compare to total arrivals in 2022 in the PNT? Was it a closer match than with the standardized system?**
- A. IRCC will be looking into this once the data and reports are in.
- Q. How can Anglophone SPOs get a list of Francophone services to redirect clients?**
- A. IRCC website lists all funded organizations. The Francophone SPOs are listed there. Reaching out to the Francophone Immigration Networks (RIFs) is another option. Except for Nunavut, they are the voice of the francophone sector across the PNT.
- Q. Is the centralized intake and referral working similarly across the region, or are there any challenges?**
- A. SPOs mentioned challenges, but they have yet to be confirmed by an evaluation. Some are logical. Evaluation will be able to tell from the client's perspective as well.

## Day One Closing Remarks

### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Michael Afenia, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA), introduces the closing remarks and shares some of his personal stories. Finally, he thanks the participants, the Summit organizers and IRCC.

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## Day 2. February 28th, 2023, A.M.

### Day 2 Opening Remarks

#### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Michael Afenia, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA), welcomes participants and proceeds with the land acknowledgment. He then introduces the topic of the day and the following speakers.

### Plenary Session 2. Vicarious Trauma and Resilience Initiative: Supporting Wellness in Settlement

#### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

##### Presenters:

- Abdikheir Ahmed, Executive Director, AFTC
- Kari McCluskey, Vicarious Trauma Initiative Facilitator, AFTC

**AFTC.** Aurora Family Therapy Centre (AFTC) is a mental health service provider serving newcomers and the general community. AFTC is committed to increasing the overall mental health and well-being of individuals, couples, families, and communities through culturally conscious, trauma-informed therapeutic and community-based services.

**Background.** AFTC has been in operation since 1972. It is one of the main practicum sites for the Masters of Marriage and Family Therapy Program of the University of Winnipeg. The center has 55+ therapists from many different backgrounds. Approximately 1500+ clients receive services yearly across all programs. AFTC is funded through the United Way, IRCC, the provincial government, and other grants.

**Trauma-Informed Care.** The integration of a trauma-informed framework to service provision is a shift from a deficit focus of “What is wrong with you?” to “What has happened to you?” This recognizes that traumas are unexpected, uncontrollable, disempowering, and dehumanizing. AFTC’s primary goal as service providers is to help others while not harm. The trauma-informed approach helps with unintentional harm.

**Trauma Responsiveness.** At AFTC, it means

- integrating practices that uphold trauma-informed principles;
- ensuring students/clients remain the experts in their stories;
- intentional reflecting and assessing practices (personal and organizational);
- committing to learning (historical and cultural contexts and professional development).

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**Challenges.** Working with clients can be hard for numerous reasons, such as

- developing intimate relationships with people in their most vulnerable moments.
- witnessing stories of pain, loss, and suffering.
- feeling helpless under the weight of significant issues with no end in sight.
- limited resources.
- emotional labour involved managing one's internal process versus one's external process.
- emotional strain it takes to work with difficult systems, ongoing needs, reminders of trauma histories, clashes with values and difficult clients.
- increasing demands on our time and energy and the elusive island of and-then.

**Meaning.** The work is also meaningful.

- SPOs build relationships in which people trust them in their most vulnerable moments.
- SPOs hold healing space when witnessing stories of pain and loss.
- SPOs affect change through advocacy, collaboration, and engagement.
- SPOs witness the resilience, growth, and success of clients.
- SPOs foster meaningful connections with colleagues.
- SPOs are part of a network working towards common goals and the success of every newcomer family coming to Canada.

**Vicarious Trauma and Resilience Initiative.** The initiative responds to the impact of working with clients who have experienced trauma and the physiological changes that service providers may experience from witnessing stories of pain and suffering.

**Initiative Aims.** The Vicarious Trauma and Resilience Initiative provides education and training supporting individuals and groups working with refugees. In addition, the initiative seeks to enhance understanding of the impact of (dis)stress, burnout, empathic strain, and vicarious trauma and sustain a collective culture of support and wellness for service providers so they may continue to offer exemplary service to their clients and community.

**Initiative Audience.** The initiative focuses primarily on IRCC-funded SPOs, but will support other audiences working directly with newcomers, such as education and public service sector members; interpreters, private sponsors; and ethnocultural community leaders.

**Format.** Services include mentorship for promoting wellness in the workplace, educational training, and workshops for all levels of service and care providers, and peer support opportunities. AFTC provides peer support through interagency groups and resource sharing, specialized training, collaborative assessment, networking, and engagement opportunities. To see changes, training and engagement should be ongoing. AFTC recommends three sessions a year. Extended support to intersecting agencies/sectors must be provided.

**Organizational Impact of Vicarious Trauma.** The initiative helps with the quality of work, relationships, and connections in the workplace. It contributes to fighting cynicism, pessimism, and lack of creativity. It improves employee health and wellness while decreasing absenteeism and staff turnover.





## Question and Answer Period

**Q. Is the Vicarious Trauma and Resilience Initiative available in French?**

A. Not currently.

**Q. What advice would you give someone who is a trauma victim and helping others overcome their trauma?**

A. This question begs for lots of questions to provide an accurate answer. However, having a trauma history buried deep down can pose a risk and should be addressed before helping others.

**Q. Is the Vicarious Trauma and Resilience Initiative free of charge for IRCC-funded organizations? What about non-IRCC-funded organizations? Is the training available online?**

A. The initiative is available in Manitoba due to limited funds. The conference allows us to assess interest in gathering more funding. The training is free of charge aside from transportation. AFTC also works with SAISIA for peer support. Virtual training is also available.

**Q. SPOs workers seem to be exposed to trauma. What assistance should be provided by their employers to support employees?**

A. Wellness practices should be integrated into the workplace and supported by leadership. However, peer support must also happen within the leadership to sustain the organization.

## Networking Cafe

Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

Presenters:

- Harjeet Kaur, Supervisor, SODS
- Hervé Stéclebout, Directeur général, La Cité des Rocheuses
- Khadija Hamdani, Coordinatrice adjointe du CLIC, La Cité des Rocheuses
- Natalia Shen, Manager of Housing Department, CFN

The session includes three presentations.

### The C4 Club and CLIC in Canada

**La Cité des Rocheuses.** It is a cultural center located in Calgary and has been delivering services in French for five years. It is the only SPOs for French language services in Alberta.

**Context.** In April 2019, La Cité des Rocheuses was selected to offer the CLIC program. As Manitoba and Ontario already had CLIC programs, La Cité des Rocheuses sought support, guidance, and

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pedagogical material for learners to launch the program. In 2021, during a CLIC coordinators' meeting with IRCC, the isolation and lack of consistent resources appeared to be a common challenge to all SPOs delivering the CLIC. Creating a club appeared as one way to collaborate and gain expertise.

**Project.** A survey was launched in 2021 to deepen the idea. In 2022, Club 4C was born and now has a coordinator. The Club 4C

- brings together the CLIC coordinators of Canada.
- proposes collaborative solutions related to management issues.
- co-creates educational content and material available on Avenue.ca.

**Functioning.** The Club 4C organizes bimonthly meetings to

- breaking the isolation of CLIC actors;
- creating bridges between CLIC actors and strengthening ties;
- listening to CLIC actors;
- reporting on Club4C's progress.

The Club 4C interviews CLIC coordinators via surveys to identify themes and priorities to be addressed and specific cultural and provincial elements to be included.

**Co-creation of learning materials.** It includes:

- Material that is easily customizable and deployable.
- A comprehensive coverage, limiting instructor preparation time.
- A co-creation operational staff.

The learning material covers levels 1 to 7.

**Labor Market Integration.** The program aims to support newcomers integrating the labour market and staying employed.

### Housing for Ukrainian Evacuees

**Context.** Since 2020, 22 469 Ukrainians have come to Alberta, and 10581 settled in Calgary as of February 17th, 2023. Housing became an issue.

**Homestay program.** The Center for Newcomers (CFN) implemented the Homestay program in response to the housing crisis. It involves volunteers becoming hosts through three easy steps on an online portal. CFN then provide them with a match and settlement services. It is a win-win solution has relationships developed between hosts and Ukrainian newcomers. In addition, CFN has a follow-up protocol with host families.

**Program Development.**

1. One goal is to find new homestays by
  - meeting with communities and churches to raise awareness;
  - designing promotional material shared throughout communities and businesses;
  - advertising through social media for a one-month commitment from the homestay;

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- featuring ways for Ukrainian families to contribute to the homestay (chip in for groceries, etc.)
2. Another goal is to provide long-term rent by
- providing consultations and workshops regarding first rent in Canada to help newcomers understand the Canadian system;
  - collaborating with rental agencies that have relief packages for Ukrainians.

**Program Data.**

- 734 people were matched within 166 Homestays since the beginning of the war in 2022.
- 17% of homestays hosted Ukrainian families several times.
- 16% of clients were employed with the help of homestay.
- 5% of clients accepted accommodation in rural areas.
- 99% of clients signed long-term rental agreements within the first three months in Canada.

**Call to Action.** To further address the ongoing arrivals, there is a need for

- more affordable housing for all newcomers;
- a better understanding of newcomers' needs in housing;
- more collaborations between government, businesses, and all non-profit organizations to ensure all newcomers have affordable housing.

**Empowering Newcomer Youth: Peer Leadership Program as a Best Practice**

**Context.** A steady rise in immigration levels is a reality. Children with an immigrant background could represent between 39% and 49% of the total population of children in 2036. Youth has a lot of potential but faces lots of challenges.

**Challenges.** Newcomer youth can experience

- Language barriers, loss of ethnic, family and friendship network support.
- Want to act as cultural brokers between parents and the host community.
- False sense of empowerment and rights that may be used against parents.
- Loneliness for being caught in between two worlds' cultures of origin and new host culture.

**Peer Leadership Program.** IRCC funds the program. It mobilizes partnerships and peer-to-peer support to integrate youth into groups of their peers, both those of their background and those from the mainstream community. It provides a warm, welcoming first contact, a liaison between schools and new families and assistance to new students. The program is youth-driven and customized based on each school's needs.

**Training of Peer Leader.** Specialized training occurs once a year, usually before the start of the academic year and includes

- basic knowledge of the Peer Leader program;
- a better understanding of intercultural communication;

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- information about the Canadian school system;
  - skills to facilitate interactive activities in group sessions;
  - team building skills.

**Enhanced Peer Leader Program.** The enhanced peer leader program provides training and orientation sessions from a few days of engagement to an all-year-long program, evolving into regular programming focusing on building the individual leadership capacities of youth. The goal is to strengthen existing peer leader programs run by SWIS workers. In addition, the program builds upon the existing resources to facilitate connections among newcomer students, their families, SWIS and schools throughout the academic year.

**Peer Leaders Role.** They are the first point of contact, making the newcomer student feel comfortable on their first day of school. They are responsible for

- meeting newcomer students and families at student services;
- introducing themselves as peer leaders and building their leadership capacity and language skills;
- providing orientation and school tours;
- exchanging contact information;
- asking the student to meet at the school on the first day;
- helping youth newcomers with their schedule and school requirements.

**Outcomes.** Youth newcomers and peer leaders gain

- enhanced social networks and integration
- healthier peer relationships
- increased Youth Engagement, including for newcomers to become peer leaders later
- improved Official language skills and self-confidence around language skills
- enhanced life skills and valuable experience for employment purposes

## **Breakout Session. More than the Sum of our Parts: How to leverage resources to build an inclusive and supportive community**

Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

Presenter:

- Lori Steward, Refugee & Immigrant Health and Case Coordination Manager, GGP

**GDP.** Global Gathering Place (GDP) adopted an anti-oppressive practice approach while working with vulnerable clients. Mitigating oppression and equalizing power imbalance support immigrants and refugees to make valuable contributions to all aspects of Canadian society when allowed.

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**Context.** About 1 person in 4 currently living in Canada was born abroad. As a result, all systems do serve newcomers to some extent. However, it should not solely fall on settlement agencies to make services accessible to newcomers.

**Best Practices to Produce Change.**

- Involving clients to include clients instead of doing it for them. To be involved and understand how tedious and complex processes are in Canada is important for them to become independent. Clients are also their own best advocates. When experiencing system challenges, they can advocate for change at various levels.
- Training staff is key to generating change in the long term. Therefore, searching for additional funding and incentives for staff to train are crucial.
- Saying “yes” to any individual or group interested in the SPOs to foster relationships and potential change. Engaging is a way to be heard.
- Forming partnerships. In Saskatoon, GGP has partnered with Saskatchewan Health Authorities (SHA) to deliver COVID-19 vaccination campaigns better. Accessing legal support is another challenge for newcomers, so a partnership with CLASSIC Law has been established.

**Role of Government.** Governments can play a part in long-term change by

- funding professional development;
- creating efficiency for the sector’s workers, such as reserved phone lines to access services;
- plan client flow to better plan immigration wave management throughout the year;
- involving everyone in the change process.



**Question and Answer Period**

**Q. Can you explain the process for requesting a paramedic nurse?**

A. In Saskatoon, it is not a public service. It is delivered through GGP.

**Q. What strategy should service providers adopt for PD? Would you consider any PNT approach for the settlement services?**

A. The Summit is amazing. Online PD is also great for workers to access knowledge independently. A free PNT platform would be useful.

**Q. What are some of the strategies you have for staff training, PD?**

A. We mentor new staff members by matching them with current staff. Some PD Day involves staff sharing some knowledge they have or have acquired through a previous position. Not all PD includes travelling.

**Q. What is some core training that you would recommend?**

A. Vicarious Trauma Training would be one of them. Training on how to interview clients and take notes in a timely manner is also beneficial.

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## Breakout Session. Urban/Rural Partnerships in Manitoba: Down Payment Assistance and Beyond the Perimeter

### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

#### Presenters:

- Codi Guenther, Executive Director, New Journey Housing
- Steve Reynolds, Executive Director, Regional Connections Immigrant Services

Recent sector partnerships in Manitoba are helping newcomers achieve more positive settlement outcomes by accessing suitable and affordable housing.

**Beyond the Perimeter.** Beyond The Perimeter is an annual event organized by MANSO that provides bus tours for newcomers in Winnipeg to rural communities. These tours inform newcomers about employment and housing opportunities, settlement, community services, and more. During COVID, the event shifted online. As a result, newcomers are informed of opportunities for life and work 'beyond the perimeter,' and some choose to move to more affordable rural areas.

**Example.** On March 9, 2021, the first-ever virtual Beyond the Perimeter tour allowed participants to discover Steinbach for free. Steinbach is a community of about 16,000 people, about an hour drive from Winnipeg. Three employers and newcomer-serving organizations in Steinbach were present. Newcomers got an understanding of the various schools for children and adults and heard testimonials from some newcomers who made a move from Winnipeg to Steinbach themselves.

**Down Payment Assistance program.** Through New Journey Housing in Winnipeg, the program includes partnerships with Westman Immigrant Services (WIS) and Regional Connections Immigrant Services. Through this project, newcomers in multiple urban and rural communities receive down payment assistance and can transition into home ownership.

#### **Program Eligibility Criteria.**

- Maximum income is \$84600.
- Family saves \$5000, and DPA adds another \$10,000 for downpayment and \$1750 for closing costs.
- Must be first home purchased in Canada, dependents, get mortgage approval from a lender.
- Live in a house for at least 5 years.
- Max house price is \$275,000.
- Attend 6 hours of home purchasing workshops.

#### **Results.** In 2022-2023,

- Westman Immigrant Services (WIS)– 7 families bought homes.
- Regional Connections – 3 families bought homes.
- Winnipeg – 4 families bought homes.
- Home prices ranged between \$89,000 and \$315,000

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**Benefits.** The program results in improved settlement outcomes for immigrants, newcomers, and refugees, increase retention in rural communities, drives economic growth, and has a generational impact.

**Challenges.** House prices have increased since 2020, even in smaller communities with a slower increase. Higher interest rates impact families not getting approved for as much as they would like. Finally, home buying isn't a solution for recently arrived newcomers.

**Takeaways.** Housing is part of the settlement. Rural communities provide affordable rental and home ownership options. More support is needed to connect immigrants to home ownership in rural communities.

## Breakout Session. Newcomer Housing – Ongoing Issues, Ukraine Response, and Looking Ahead

### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

#### Presenters:

- Codi Guenther, Executive Director, New Journey Housing
- Emily Halldorson, Ukraine Response Coordinator, MANSO
- Jean Bruce Koua, Elev
- Kevin Mpunga, Elev
- Steve Reynolds, Executive Director, Regional Connections Immigrant Services

### Solving the Student Housing Crisis

**Context.** The presentation focuses on the housing challenges faced by international students in Canada. There are currently 2.17 million students enrolled in Canada, and 400 000 are international students. As more and more are coming to study in the country, housing is a key issue for the sector.

#### **Students Housing Crisis.**

1. The current system isn't working for students. Rental platforms aren't built for them.
2. Students don't know what they're doing. Yet, they're expected to figure it out.
3. Landlords aren't comfortable with students, even though they can earn more from them.

**Response.** Elev is an app designed to help students find a place to live while studying away from home and live a stress-free tenancy. The app covers all aspects of the ecosystem for student living. The platform is built for students and offers a selection of homes picked for *the* student. The app proposes an easy process that anyone can navigate from anywhere in the world.

**Elev Services.** The students can see listings from their home country. They can book a virtual visit. They can build a relationship with the landlord and sign the lease through the platform before coming

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to Canada. Elev also educates students through the platform. They can learn about Canadian culture and even pay the rent through the platform. The platform tracks and secures payments for both students and landlords. Also, a support system is in place to answer students' questions.

**Landlord perspective.** Elev staff serves as a cultural broker between students and landlords. The app promises users security, protects their income and guarantees satisfaction: the rent is paid on time, and they are offered a 45-day Rent protection if students fail to pay the rent.



### Question and Answer Period

**Q. For which city is the platform currently available in?**

A. The platform is currently only serving Edmonton to ensure the safe testing of the product. However, as the company grows, other cities will be added.

**Q. What is the cost for students and landlords to use the platform?**

A. There is no cost until a student can find a home and a landlord starts generating income. Elev then takes a small percentage of the rent, between 1 and 3%, to cover services and the rent guarantee.

**Q. Do you also teach students about the actual cost of renting, including utilities?**

A. When matching students to their new homes, Elev runs an algorithm to identify the best house for students based on various factors, such as utilities. The algorithm takes into consideration the variation of the various utilities' costs. A breakdown shows students why a house can be a good match or not. The app also has a resource/education section where students find answers to common questions. There is also a blog where housing-related topics are addressed and discussed.

## **Breakout Session. Empowering Communities Through Self-defense and Social Inclusion**

Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

Presenter:

- Ayotunde Kayode, Director for Community Relations & Mentorship, CFN

**CFN.** Since 1988 the Centre for Newcomers (CFN) has been a key resource for immigrants and refugees of all nationalities in Calgary. A non-profit organization, CFN views the integration of newcomers as a two-way process of experience, influence and impact between newcomers and the communities that welcome them.



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**Programming.** CFN works with different organizations and community groups to promote programs that address discrimination and racism impacting newcomers and refugee families to Canada. Individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds can face prejudice, hatred, discrimination, and systemic barriers affecting their health, well-being, access to labour market integration, employment, social inclusion, education, and public services. Incidentally, there has been a rise in hate crimes.

**Racism.** Racism is observable in individuals, communities, institutions, policies, and systems. Some guiding principles of Canada’s anti-racism strategy include “empowering communities” and “building awareness and changing attitudes” CFN’s “empowering communities through Self-defense” program aligns with Canada’s anti-racism strategy, which helps community members draw on lived experiences to foster social inclusion.

**Empowering Communities through Self-defense.** The program “Empowering Communities through Self-defense” was launched in 2018 and aims to prevent and address gender-based violence, focusing on sexual violence and exploitation. The attendees were provided with relevant information and had the opportunity to engage in a question-and-answer session with representatives of the Calgary Police Services.

**Program Audience.** The program supports vulnerable Albertans, newcomers, and community members to address the social well-being of isolated persons to build resiliency. It targets youth, Indigenous women and girls, the immigrant population, seniors, individuals experiencing mental health challenges, LGBTQ2+, and persons with disability. 958 individuals attended the program through 68 Empowerment talks and self-defense sessions. CFN partners with 52 organizations to deliver the program and 108 volunteers.

**Training.** Several techniques are taught during the training:

- Dealing with an immediate threat.
- Basic self-defense skills and awareness.
- Effective and efficient striking methods to quickly get away from an attacker.
- Use of everyday objects for defense.
- Environmental awareness.
- Improved coordination and fitness.

**Rationale.** Self-defense is crucial for both individuals and the community for several reasons.

- It enhances personal safety and reduces the risk of harm from potential threats, such as physical attacks or assaults.
- The ability to defend oneself boosts self-confidence, and it empowers individuals to take control of their lives. This increased self-assurance can help individuals to navigate potentially dangerous situations and respond more effectively.
- Self-defense skills acquisition helps to contribute to a safer community. Knowing that individuals can protect themselves and others ultimately leads to a reduction in crime rates.

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## Day 2. February 28th, 2023, P.M.

### Breakout Session. Next funding cycle of the Settlement and Resettlement Assistance Programs

#### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

##### Presenters:

- David Cashaback, Director, Settlement and Integration Policy, IRCC
- Melanie Holmgren, Acting Regional Director, PNT, Settlement Network, IRCC
- Yann Legrand, Assistant Director, IRCC

**CFP 2019.** CFP 2019 has been the largest call for proposals ever held by IRCC. The CFP introduced the CORE principles (COEUR in French). IRCC signed more than 500 contribution agreements with SPOs in the process. CFP 2019 helped reinforce local immigration partnership (LIP) and Francophone immigration networks (RIF). There are now 86 LIPs across the country and 13 RIFs.

**Data.** Since the close of CFP 2019, some 960 000 people, including 150 000 refugees, became permanent residents in Canada. Between April 2020 and December 2022, more than one million clients accessed at least one settlement service nationwide. During the COVID-19 pandemic, SPOs pivoted toward digital services. Close to 90% of clients received at least one service online or in a hybrid format. An increase in resettlement services providers from 32 to 40 helped with the arrival of Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.

**Results.** The first report on settlement services, titled “Settlement Outcomes Highlights Report,” was released in 2021. It examines the successes and challenges of newcomers from 2015 to 2019, emphasizing their use of settlement services. The second edition will be available in Fall 2023. From a national perspective, settlement and resettlement services work well for clients.

**Findings.** The report highlights a solid foundation on which IRCC will continue to build.

- 84% of clients report that services improve their knowledge of life in Canada.
- 95% of clients who received Needs and Assets Assessments and Referrals (NAARS) describe these referrals and linkages as useful.
- 78% of clients said the employment-related services helped them increase their knowledge, connections, and skills to prepare for the labour market.
- 62% of clients report services helped them meet someone they now consider a close friend.

##### **Programs Components.**

- Information and orientation (I&O) is the most accessed service nationally, followed by Needs and Assets Assessments and Referrals (NAARS).
- Female clients access programs at a higher rate than their male counterparts.
- Refugees continue to be more likely to attend Community Connections services (CC) than other newcomers, such as newcomers from the economic class.

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**CFP 2024.** CFP 2024 will include Settlement and Resettlement Assistance Programs. No significant changes are to be expected. The focus will be on serving the right clients who need it at the right time. It is important to align services with clients' strengths and needs, whatever their location.

A challenge remains the uptake of settlement services, as under 2/3 of newcomers to Canada say they were not aware of settlement services.

Advancing outcome-based program management will remain a priority. It will include strengthening performance indicators across the program, including indirect services.

Innovative approaches to service delivery will also stay a priority while scaling and consolidating innovative approaches currently implemented. Eligible clients will remain the same.

## **Breakout Session. Innovating to build capacity, increase retention, and leverage partnerships for newcomer employability.**

### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

#### Presenter:

- Enver Naidoo, Executive Director, WIS

The session is an interactive workshop.

**Data.** According to Statistics Canada, from 2016 to 2020:

- 46.3% of adult immigrants admitted in all immigration pathways accessed at least one type of settlement service. Some 50% of newcomers do not access services, which has been a trend for the past 10 years.
- In comparison, 89.4% of refugees accessed settlement services.
- Most immigrants entering Canada are of the economic class.
- Of all economic class principal applicants, only 35.2% used settlement services.

**Access to Services.** Economic Class Immigrants are not using settlement services, and the sector must explore why. They might either don't need them or are unaware of them. Either way, in the next 3 years, the number of economic class immigrants arriving will continue to grow, and it is critical to engage with them.

**Challenges.** Many immigrants are struggling with participating in the Canadian Labour Market. This applies to both regulated and non-regulated professions. These are individuals, many of whom are fluent in one of the official languages, have previous professional work experience, and are career ready.

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**Addressing the Challenges.** Three avenues are explored:

1. Client engagement strategies.
2. How to deliver more value to job seekers for the Canadian labour market.
3. Develop and leverage new partnerships.

**Best Practices.**

**1. Increased Client Engagement.**

- Increasing service delivery hours as clients may have survival jobs and cannot access typical services Monday to Friday.
- Implementing direct and relationship marketing focusing on Employment Services.
- Setting up a new employment department and moving it to a new independent location.
- Marketing these employment services to various multicultural groups and the immigrant community.
- Increase access through extended hours and weekend hours.

**2. More Value.**

- Creating training opportunities that are unique to immigrants and newcomers.
- Developing new training approaches to help with newcomers' identity shift where clients could use their skills and experience but find other career paths to explore as many economic class immigrants as possible, the career that got them into Canada was one they were struggling to get back into. WIS is now in conversations with developers to look at AI solutions to scale delivery to more clients on their employment journey.

**3. New Partnerships.**

- Revisiting existing partnerships and building new ones to further access funding and support more employers in understanding how to recruit immigrant talent better and through meaningful employment, hopefully increasing retention in our community.

**Takeaways.** By creating another ramp to connect with clients who typically do not use settlement services, the WIS employment team in 2022 has increased their annual target by nearly 400%, which indicates that the demand was always there. WIS can then refer these clients and their families to settlement services to address gaps.



**Question and Answer Period**

**Q. How can settlement services help clients to face the impact of IA on the labour market in the coming years?**

- A. WIS started with a manual approach to better employment services and is now switching to IA. Machine learning can speed up the process of making the connection between an individual's skills and experience and possible career paths.

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**Q. Is there some plan to harmonize educational requirements across Canada? Newcomers often relocate based on the accreditation process, which is detrimental to provinces where the process is not as easy as in other provinces.**

A. It links to how we create another ladder to help newcomers pivot career-wise and move forward instead of falling into the cracks.

## Breakout Session. Threads: A Fresh Approach to EDI Through Community Education

Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

Presenter:

- Anita Ogurlu, Cultural Bridging Facilitator, SODS

The interactive session provides an example of truth and reconciliation practice led by the Saskatoon Open Door Society (SODS) in Saskatchewan.

**Threads.** The program involves cultural bridging facilitator developing bridges between culture and people. It is a philosophical position that aims to better society. Their job is to go to various SPOs providing sessions on specific issues they may have, such as islamophobia and cross-cultural competencies. It used to be in-person before the COVID-19 pandemic. The program then moved online.

**Threads Conference.** These conferences mobilize cultural conversations providing a cross-cultural education and arts-based platform responding to current trends: migration across the globe, conflict and violence causing refugee crisis, the global pandemic, inequity, systemic racism and racial discrimination, the polarization of cultures into silos based on race, religion and ethnicity and the politics of binary thinking, etc.

**Relationships Building.** Threads explore the issues, challenges and desires for Newcomers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures to live in harmony, to settle and belong anew. Participatory sessions weave together knowledge talks, art, film, storytelling, dance, music, theatre, fashion, poetry, philosophy and more to discuss and explore issues around what it means to flourish and belong as diverse people.

**Format.** Threads Conference is an annual two-day local international virtual event held in January. It gathers over 30 national and international speakers and performers from all walks of life. Keynote speakers include Michaëlle Jean, Chief Cadmus Delorme of Cowessess First Nation, award-winning author Kim Thúy, and CBC host Ginella Massa, among many others. The conference allows equal contribution from Newcomers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures. They shared human experience with arts-based expression and knowledge talks. The conference engages participants firsthand in cross-cultural dialogue. Storytelling acts as ‘counsel’ to facilitate new perspectives and debunk assumptions.

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**Results.** The program is in its 4<sup>th</sup> running year. To date, the program counts

- 1,497 registrants (2022); 1,301 registrants (2023)
- Nearly 1,000 locals from Saskatoon and Saskatchewan
- Registrants from almost all provinces and territories
- International registrants from 39 countries on 5 continents

**Threads Library.** The online library contains recordings of all talks and performances from Threads 2021, 2022, 2023 and forthcoming Threads 2024, as well as never before seen videos to further cultural learning and community development. SODS continue adding content to the library to support all who want to broaden their cross-cultural understanding. The content has French subtitles.

## Breakout Session. La Cité des Rocheuses and Centre for Newcomers collaboration on Francophones

### Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

#### Presenters:

- Hervé Stéclebout, Directeur général, La Cité des Rocheuses
- Liana Kalognomou, Coordinatrice adjointe Portail, La Cité des Rocheuses
- Charlie Wang, Chief Client Service Officer, CFN

**Context.** Centre for Newcomers (CFN) and La Cité des Rocheuses partnered in the Gateway/Portail project to better support Francophone newcomers. La Cite representative now has a presence at CFN since October 2022. Alberta is seeing an influx of Francophones, many of whom are moving from Quebec. This arrangement provides Anglophone and Francophone services under one roof.

Till Q3 end, 43 Francophone referrals had been made to La Cite. Francophone clients can access services and programs provided by CFN and specialized services offered by La Cite des Rocheuses and other Francophone agencies.

**Specifications.** The Gateway/Portail is a centralized online platform for Francophone newcomers in Calgary. Portail is a new working model for optimizing the settlement and integration of newcomers, helping agencies better manage their resources and deliver services more efficiently.

**Functioning.** The Gateway/Portail allows documenting the client's profile and needs. Each organization has a specific role in offering services to newcomers, but the client does not need to repeat his story for each SPOs:

- La Cité des Rocheuses offers NAARS.
- Centre d'Accueil pour Nouveaux Arrivants Francophone (CANAF) offers case management.
- Portail de l'Immigrant Association (PIA) provides services for vulnerable clients and community activities.

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**Challenges.** To implement the Gateway/Portail, some challenges needed to be addressed around:

- Referral between organizations.
- Concerns regarding the decrease in grants and the number of clients served per organization.
- Development of tools and procedures, including confidentiality.
- Turnover of clients in organizations.



### Question and Answer Period

**Q. Does the data shown for 2023 represent the services that were duplicated?**

A. No, it showed services that were not duplicated, given that the model is still under implementation. Some clients have a settlement plan dating from 2021, so there are currently transitioning into the new model.

**Q. How would that work regarding service development around mental health, housing, etc.?**

A. It depends on where the services fall, based on the IRCC definition and each SPO's mandate and resources.

**Q. Does the Gateway/Portail serve all of Alberta?**

A. No, only Calgary.

**Q. Are there other evaluation metrics than the one provided by IRCC?**

A. We work like the rest of the SPOs using iCare, but internally, we can trace several clients referred to settlement services.

**Q. What is your dream about the Gateway/Portail?**

A. We work with Francophone SPOs, so we aim to expand our partnership with Anglophone SPOs and have an employee to build these relationships to increase the potential of new services for clients with specific needs. Having a person able to meet newcomers right away is also crucial.

**Q. Is there a collaboration with services like Help Seekers that look after all the services to ensure the information is more frequent and updated?**

A. All organizations manage and update information.

**Q. Could Charlie share some insight from an Anglophone SPO on this?**

A. Francophone newcomers are often unaware of the Francophone services available. So, we offer a space to collaborate as part of the Gateway/Portail. For newcomers to be part of Gateway/Portail is a way to find these services, including office space, computers, etc.

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## Breakout Session. Calgary Newcomers Collaborative: A Community Hub

### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

#### Presenters:

- Anila Lee Yuen, President and CEO, CFN
- Hervé Stéclebout, Directeur général, La Cité des Rocheuses
- Sally Zhao

**Background.** The Calgary Newcomer Collaborative began to form between 2016 and 2019 when the Centre for Newcomers (CFN) started building collaborative funding models in East Calgary with the help of The Immigrant Education Society (TIES). As a result, CFN's partnerships grew from 8 organizations to 250.

The Calgary East Zone Newcomers Collaborative (CENC) believes a strong community is created through building relationships. As a group, we hope to welcome newcomers in East Calgary and support them with their needs through our free services. The zonal approach is a community model for inclusion for all newcomers to Calgary.

**Example of Crisis Response Situation.** During the COVID-19 pandemic, east Calgary showed the highest Covid-19 cases and the lowest vaccination rates. CENC became the backbone of the Calgary COVID Table and guided other jurisdictions, including Edmonton, Red Deer, and Toronto, on replicating. The Government of Alberta provided \$2.6 million to support their effort. A total of 254 social services and community groups worked together to provide services and support throughout Calgary.

**COVID Outcomes Achieved.** The collaborative work led to a 99% vaccination rate in Calgary Northeast, one of the country's highest within nine months. In addition, 20,616 community members helped via Multilingual Hotline. As a result, 50,000+ Calgarians benefited from the collaborative response, and hundreds of families utilized the homelessness diversion programming.

#### **Governance Structure.**

- CENC Advisory Committee continues to serve as an advisory committee to CNC.
- CENC organizations are CNC partner organizations unless they specify otherwise in writing.
- The chair of CENC is CFN, and CNC's chair(s) rotate out in two-year terms.
- As part of their executive duties, ISC serve as a knowledge expert regarding the Gatewayconnects.ca system, AD as a knowledge expert for advocacy efforts, La Cité as an expert for Francophone services, and CFN will serve as secretary to the collaborative to ensure historical record keeping.

**Policy Statement.** The Calgary Newcomers Collaborative values the diversity of its partners' employees and clients. It strives to treat people fairly, with dignity and respect. This policy applies to all projects, partner group arrangements, and collaboration efforts involving the CNC partners. As such, all partners must sign the CNC memorandum of understanding (MOU), which compels all CNC



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partners to follow this policy. Services must be offered in a collaborative project or partnership only by parties that do sign the CNC MOU. Parties or prospective partners that do not sign and adhere to the MOU and this policy cannot offer services as a part of the CNC partnership.

### **Ongoing CNC Collaborations.**

- Francophone Pathways
- Ukrainian response
- The Immigrant Arrival Centre is a Calgary Newcomers Collaborative project. In a first-of-its-kind partnership, eight newcomer-serving organizations that are members of the CNC collaborated came together to launch the Immigrant Arrival Centre to offer information services to new arrivals at Calgary's International Airport (YYC).

**Moving forward: Priority Areas.** CNC CEOs meet as often as possible, typically once a month, to discuss client needs and sector trends.

Here are some priority areas for the next two years:

- Youth Forum 2023
- Advocacy and education around systemic discrimination, credential recognition, affordable housing, culturally comforting food security
- Indigenous education for newcomers. What started as a series of pilots between CBFY, TIES, and CFN 6 years ago is now a complete program funded by IRCC. To date, 16 organizations have been trained, with over 60 staff having learned the information.



### **Question and Answer Period**

**Q. Could you expand on how the CNC model differs from the work of LIPs and EISA?**

A. Both come with some funding priorities directed by IRCC. While that is important and true of most SPOs who signed the memorandum of understanding to be part of the CENC, it does not allow them to focus on emergent trends. The focus is on program delivery which is not what LIPs and EISA are mandated to do.

**Q. Do you collaborate with the LIPs?**

A. Yes

**Q. What are the critical underpinning requirements for sustainable collaborations, and what resources are required to achieve this?**

A. The CENC policy statement lists the requirements and protocols to follow to be part of the CENC.

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## Summit Closing Remarks

### Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Vicki Sinclair, Executive Director of the Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO), proceeds with closing remarks and comments on the situation in the Mediterranean Sea, where the migrant crisis keeps unfolding. She reminds the participants that change is slow, but the sector is making a difference. She then invites Marina Marchand, Acting Assistant Director, Settlement sector at IRCC, to provide some closing remarks.

Marina Marchand thanks all participants and wishes a good day three to participants in their provincial meetings.

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## APPENDIX

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## Summit Program



2023 PRAIRIES  
& NORTHERN  
TERRITORIES  
SUMMIT

SOMMET DES  
PRAIRIES ET  
DES TERRITOIRES  
DU NORD 2023

### 2023 Prairies & Northern Territories Winter Summit // 2023 Sommet d'hiver des Prairies et des Territoires du Nord

Monday, Feb 27: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

08:30 AM - 09:00 AM

#### Breakfast // Petit-déjeuner

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Monday, Feb 27: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

09:00 AM - 09:15 AM

#### Welcome & Opening Remarks // Bienvenue et remarques d'ouverture

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Monday, Feb 27: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

09:15 AM - 09:30 AM

#### IRCC Opening Remarks // Remarques d'ouverture de l'IRCC

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Patricia Wilson  
Director General, Settlement Network, IRCC

Join us as we hear from Patricia Wilson. // Rejoignez-nous pour écouter Patricia Wilson.

Monday, Feb 27: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

09:30 AM - 10:15 AM

## Developing an Anti-Racism Framework for the Settlement Sector, and Pursuing Truth and Reconciliation as Settlement Organizations

Élaboration d'un cadre de lutte contre le racisme pour le secteur de l'établissement et recherche de la vérité et de la réconciliation en tant qu'organisations d'établissement

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

**Seid Oumer Ahmed**  
Associate Executive Director, MANSO

**Shereen Denetto**  
Executive Director, IRCOM

Within the settlement sector, although not always discussed openly, racism and systemic barriers exist for racialized staff. In parallel, settlement organizations also need to confront and understand our role as settlers on Indigenous lands, and ways we can be allies and actively engaged in Truth and Reconciliation. In both cases, speaking openly about individual, systemic and cultural barriers, and the possible ways we reproduce them, is essential, as is listening to those where solutions reside. Participants will learn about the collective BIPOC-led mobilization of SPOs to adopt and implement a provincial anti-racism framework for the settlement sector in Manitoba, and ...

Monday, Feb 27

10:15 AM - 10:30 AM

## Break // Pause

Monday, Feb 27: Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

10:30 AM - 11:00 AM

## Navigating Cultural Differences: Creating Inclusion for Gender and Sexually Diverse Youth

Naviguer dans les différences culturelles : Créer l'inclusion pour les jeunes issus de la diversité sexuelle et de genre

Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

**Mateo Jumas**  
Training Centre Facilitator, Centre for Sexuality

In this interactive workshop, participants will engage in facilitated discussions around the importance of supporting gender and sexually diverse newcomer youth as service providers. Participants will share their challenges and successes in supporting gender and sexually diverse newcomer youth and leave with strategies that can be used to navigate cultural differences within their service provision.—Dans cet atelier interactif, les participants s'engageront dans des discussions animées sur l'importance de soutenir les jeunes nouveaux arrivants issus de la diversité sexuelle et de genre en tant que prestataires de services. Les participants partageront leurs défis et leurs succès en matière de soutien aux ...

Monday, Feb 27: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

## Examining The SWIS Model of Service through the Lens of Collaborative Case Management

Examen du modèle de service SWIS sous l'angle de la gestion de cas collaborative

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

**Raghad Hussein**

Research and Evaluation Specialist, The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth

Case management is a collaborative process that draws its framework from social services. It's a client-focused process which involves assessment of needs, planning of services and inter and cross agency collaborations to provide services to clients. IRCC has been encouraging the immigrant sector to implement a case management approach to working with clients especially high need ones. The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth has recently implemented a case management structural approach to support large number of newcomer youth and to streamline internal processes. By doing so, CBFY aimed to do more with less through a series of measures which included ...

Monday, Feb 27: Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

## We Can't Pour from an Empty Cup!

On ne peut pas verser d'une tasse vide !

Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

**Amanda Pike**

PBLA Lead & Instructor, ECS D LINC

**Diana Agudelo**

Academic Coordinator, ECS D LINC

The presentation will show ECS D LINC's efforts to prioritize staff health and wellness by taking into account the stressors and increased expectations currently felt in a post covid world. We are committed to establishing practices that ensure staff are given the opportunity to contribute to the program, feel appreciated, and experience a work culture that is reflective of our Program and Leadership Values. The presentation will talk about key values (collaboration, consultation, transparency, direct communication, professionalism, empowerment, commitment to growth, forward thinking and inclusivity) and how they are exemplified by strategies and practices within ECS D LINC. To help help replenish ...

Monday, Feb 27: Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

## Newcomer Youth Empowerment & Engagement: Moving Beyond the Buzzword

Autonomisation et engagement des jeunes nouveaux arrivants : Au-delà des mots à la mode

Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

**Oliver Kamau**

Director of Programs, Edmonton Immigrant Services Association

Youth empowerment is a concept that has been widely used in human or helping services as an instrument of social policy and program implementation in addressing and influencing youth especially at the adolescent phase . Unfortunately, the concept has generally been co-opted as a buzzword for different youth programming activities, and often without clarity of how it is to be understood or measured. This presentation offers a deeper understanding of youth empowerment and leadership programs, highlights characteristics of empowering settings, as well as the centrality of youth participation in their own self-determination. Using examples from SWIS programming offered by Edmonton ...

Monday, Feb 27: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

## Lunch // Déjeuner

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Monday, Feb 27: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

12:30 PM - 01:30 PM

## Surviving or Thriving? What It Takes for Refugees to Succeed

Survivre ou prospérer ? Ce qu'il faut pour que les réfugiés réussissent

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

**Md Abdullah Al Mamun Patwary**

Team Leader, Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), Saskatoon Open Door Society, Saskatoon Open Door Society

Rethinking refugee settlement policy is a burning issue and policymakers in this field find themselves in an unusual environment with many emerging crises. This presentation will discourse on the available resources under the RAP and opportunities, as well as outline the overall gaps and challenges in the RAP services and will highlight the policy dialogue which would be beneficial for the federal, provincial and municipal governments and SPOs to align themselves to meet the growing needs of the refugees. The presentation holds practical implications for policymakers and practitioners across Canada. Ensuring timely resources in RAP services can play a crucial role ...

Monday, Feb 27: Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

12:30 PM - 01:30 PM

## Confessions of an ED

Confessions d'un directeur exécutif

Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

**Edith Montesclaros**

**Icasiana de Gala**

ED, Southwest Newcomer Welcome Centre

**Janine Hart**

ED, The Humboldt Regional Newcomer Welcome Centre

Staff retention is very important. As Executive Directors, we do our best to take care of our staff. But sometimes we ask, who takes care of the ED? This presentation looks at the role of EDs, especially those in small centres and how their role shape the delivery of service in their region. -La rétention du personnel est très importante. En tant que directeurs exécutifs, nous faisons de notre mieux pour prendre soin de notre personnel. Mais parfois, nous nous demandons : qui s'occupe du DE ? Cette présentation se penche sur le rôle des services d'urgence, en particulier ceux des ...

Monday, Feb 27: Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

12:30 PM - 01:30 PM

## Province-Wide Online Language Model: Innovation in Referral and Online Delivery

Modèle de langue en ligne à l'échelle de la province : Innovation en matière d'aiguillage et de prestation en ligne

Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

**Renée Barnabé**  
IRCC

Join us as we hear from IRCC. // Rejoignez-nous pour entendre l'IRCC.

Monday, Feb 27

01:30 PM - 01:45 PM

## Break // Pause

Monday, Feb 27: Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

01:45 PM - 02:30 PM

## Supporting Newcomer Youth with Wraparound Services and Addressing System Gaps Through Partnerships

Soutenir les jeunes nouveaux arrivants grâce à des services globaux et combler les lacunes du système par le biais de partenariats

Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

**Carolee Turner**  
Local/Regional Partnership Coordinator, Centre for Newcomers

**Noel Bahliby**  
Manager, Youth Programs, Centre for Newcomers

Join staff from the Centre for Newcomers for a presentation/case study on how newcomer youth often get involved in criminal behaviour, how system gaps help create conditions of vulnerability, and how local agencies can support high-risk youth with wraparound service delivery through stronger partnerships. Come along for a journey with Ali, new to Canada and eager to adapt to a strange environment, he seeks out opportunities to fit in and support his family. Like many new families, Ali's faces significant challenges early on. As the oldest, he feels pressure to start working and contribute to household needs. Ali is quickly drawn ...



Monday, Feb 27: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

01:45 PM - 02:30 PM

## IRCC funded settlement hotels across the prairies: challenges and successes in the delivery of federal temporary accommodation programs in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba

À quel point ce refuge est-il sûr si nous ne pouvons pas prendre de petit déjeuner ? Défis et difficultés du soutien aux arrivants ukrainiens à l'hôtel Edmonton Settlement

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

### Emily Halldorson

Ukraine Response Coordinator, Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO)

### Lisa de Gara

Manager, Small Centres, Action for Healthy Communities

### Lyudmyla Pastushenko

Team Leader of Settlement and Family Support, Saskatoon Open Door Society

### Suraj Khatiwada

Program Lead, Settlement and Integration, Action for Healthy Communities

Many Ukrainians arriving to Canada have no prior connections here. As part of the National Operation for Ukrainian Safe Haven, IRCC is funding settlement hotels in a number of cities including Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. Ukrainian arrivals can stay for a maximum of 14 days before transitioning into the community. The success of this program in each province has been influenced by the presence of other supports offered by provincial governments, service providers, and community groups. Participants will share about the successes and challenges of this program in each province. –De nombreux Ukrainiens qui arrivent au Canada n'ont aucun lien préalable ...

Monday, Feb 27

02:30 PM - 02:45 PM

## Break // Pause

Monday, Feb 27: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

02:45 PM - 03:45 PM

## Urban Transformation & Francophone Pathways

Transformation urbaine et parcours francophones

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

### Yann Legrand

Assistant Director, IRCC

Join us for this session led by IRCC on urban transformation and francophone pathways. –Rejoignez-nous pour cette session animée par IRCC sur la transformation urbaine et les parcours francophones.

Monday, Feb 27: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

03:45 PM - 04:00 PM

## Day One Closing Remarks // Remarques de clôture du 1er jour

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

08:30 AM - 09:00 AM

### **Breakfast // Petit-déjeuner**

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

09:00 AM - 09:15 AM

### **Day 2 Opening Remarks // Remarques d'ouverture du 2e jour**

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

09:15 AM - 09:30 AM

### **IRCC Remarks // Remarques de l'IRCC**

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

09:30 AM - 10:15 AM

### **Vicarious Trauma and Resilience Initiative: Supporting Wellness in Settlement**

Initiative sur le traumatisme vicariant et la résilience : Favoriser le bien-être dans l'établissement

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

**Abdikheir Ahmed**

Executive Director, Aurora Family Therapy Centre

**Kari McCluskey**

Vicarious Trauma Initiative Facilitator, Aurora Family Therapy Centre

The Vicarious Trauma and Resilience Initiative at Aurora Family Therapy Centre provides interactive training and peer support to service providers, management and community leaders working to help newcomers navigate their integration journeys. While this work can be extremely rewarding and build lasting relationships, listening to challenging and painful migration stories comes with risk of significant trauma exposure that can impact our daily lives, relationships with others, and ability to continue doing this important work. Exploring factors that may put us at risk (coping styles, willingness to establish boundaries, shared trauma experiences, etc.) can encourage individuals to take a reflexive approach ...

Tuesday, Feb 28

10:15 AM - 10:30 AM

### **Break // Pause**

Tuesday, Feb 28: Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

10:30 AM - 11:45 AM

## Networking Cafe // Café de réseautage

Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

**Harjeet Kaur**

Supervisor, Saskatoon Open Door Society

**Hervé Stéclebout**

Directeur général, La Cité des Rocheuses

**Khadija Hamdani**

Coordinatrice adjointe, La Cité des Rocheuses

**Natalia Shen**

Manager of Housing department, Centre for Newcomers

Join us for three short presentations followed by informal Q&A and networking with the presenters. // Rejoignez-nous pour trois courtes présentations suivies de questions-réponses informelles et d'une mise en réseau avec les présentateurs.#1: 4C, le club des coordinateurs CLIC au CanadaInitiative mise en place en septembre 2021 visant à fédérer le programme linguistique CLIC offert dans chaque province de Vancouver à Halifax hors Québec : proposée par la Cité des Rocheuses, appuyée par IRCC, ce projet est advenu à la suite de la mise en place du CLIC à la Cité des Rocheuses en 2019. Comme le programme est / ...

Tuesday, Feb 28: Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

10:30 AM - 11:15 AM

## More than the Sum of our Parts: How to leverage resources to build an inclusive and supportive community

Plus que la somme de nos parties : comment tirer parti des ressources pour créer une communauté inclusive et solidaire ?

Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

**Lori Steward**

Refugee & Immigrant Health and Case Coordination Manager, Global Gathering Place

A strong, integrated community must have shared accountability and coordinated services if it is to adequately support its most vulnerable members. Multi-barriered newcomers have integration needs that transcend the services of settlement agencies and traditionally require intensive support before they are able to access services. Global Gathering Place maintains that agencies and organizations whose clientele includes newcomers have responsibility to ensure services are accessible. We engage with these organizations and challenge systems and practices that inherently disadvantage newcomer clients. Progress is possible and we have enjoyed varying degrees of success in transferring these responsibilities from Settlement Agencies. From a frontline ...

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

10:30 AM - 11:00 AM

## Urban/Rural Partnerships in Manitoba: Down Payment Assistance and Beyond The Perimeter

Partenariats urbains et ruraux au Manitoba : Aide à la mise de fonds et au-delà du périmètre

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Codi Guenther

Steve Reynolds

Recent sector partnerships in Manitoba are helping newcomers achieve more positive settlement outcomes. The Down Payment Assistance program, through New Journey Housing in Winnipeg, includes partnerships with Westman Immigrant Services and Regional Connections Immigrant Services. Through this project, newcomers in multiple urban and rural communities receive down payment assistance and are able to transition into home ownership. Beyond The Perimeter is an annual event organized by MANSO that provides bus tours for newcomers in Winnipeg to rural communities. These tours inform newcomers about employment and housing opportunities, settlement and community services, and more. During COVID, a virtual delivery of this event ...

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

11:00 AM - 11:45 AM

## Newcomer Housing – Ongoing issues, Ukraine response, and Looking ahead

Logement des nouveaux arrivants - Questions en cours, réponse de l'Ukraine et perspectives d'avenir

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Codi Guenther

Emily Halldorson

Ukraine Response Coordinator, Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO)

Jean Bruce Koua

Kevin Mpunga

Elev Homes

Steve Reynolds

Newcomers face various challenges and barriers in acquiring affordable and adequate housing, which is a critical component of a successful settlement journey. This workshop will take an informal, fireside-chat style approach with the panel and will encourage audience participation. Topics of conversation will include: Housing challenges faced by newcomers Innovative solutions – Elev [www.elevhomes.ca/](http://www.elevhomes.ca/) Hear from Elev founders about their housing struggles as international students and how they are creating access to housing solutions through Elev. –Les nouveaux arrivants sont confrontés à divers défis et obstacles dans l'acquisition d'un logement abordable et adéquat, qui est une composante essentielle d'un parcours d'établissement réussi. ...

Tuesday, Feb 28: Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

11:15 AM - 11:45 AM

## Empowering Communities Through Self-defense & Social Inclusion

Renforcer les communautés par l'autodéfense et l'inclusion sociale

Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

**Ayotunde Kayode**

Director for Community Relations & Mentorship, Centre for Newcomers

As a leading organization in the settlement sector in Calgary, CFN has a long-standing experience with advocating for diversity, equity and inclusion for a broad spectrum of marginalized groups and newcomers to Calgary. Our programming includes working with different organizations and community groups to promote programs that addresses discrimination and racism impacting newcomers and refugee families to Canada. Individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds can face prejudice, hatred, discrimination, and systemic barriers that impacts their health, well-being, and access to labour market integration, employment, social inclusion, education, and public services. Incidentally, there has been a rise in hate crimes based ...

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM

## Lunch // Déjeuner

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

01:00 PM - 02:30 PM

## Next funding cycle of the Settlement and Resettlement Assistance Programs // prochain cycle de financement des programmes d'établissement et d'aide à la réinstallation

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

**David Cashaback**

This session will use Slido for Q&A. Please use the link below to submit your questions. // Cette session utilisera Slido pour les questions-réponses. Veuillez utiliser le lien ci-dessous pour soumettre vos questions. <https://app.sli.do/event/r2AGmzN9F39p418pLapqLnIRCC> will share departmental objectives for the next funding cycle, provide an overview of evidence and other data on client experiences and outcomes since 2019, and seek feedback from service providers and other settlement stakeholders on how best to meet client needs moving forward. -IRCC partagera les objectifs ministériels pour le prochain cycle de financement, fournira un aperçu des preuves et d'autres données sur les expériences et les résultats ...

Tuesday, Feb 28

02:30 PM - 02:35 PM

## Break // Pause

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

02:30 PM - 03:15 PM

### **Innovating to build capacity, increase retention, and leverage partnerships for newcomer employability.**

Innover pour renforcer les capacités, augmenter la rétention et tirer parti des partenariats pour l'employabilité des nouveaux arrivants.

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

**Enver Naidoo**  
Executive Director, Westman Immigrant Services (WIS)

In an interactive workshop format, session participants will benefit from useful examples and practical ideas that could be implemented to increase client engagement, better prepare job seekers for the Canadian labour market, and develop and leverage new partnerships. – Dans un format d'atelier interactif, les participants à la session bénéficieront d'exemples utiles et d'idées pratiques qui pourraient être mis en œuvre pour accroître l'engagement des clients, mieux préparer les demandeurs d'emploi au marché du travail canadien, et développer et tirer parti de nouveaux partenariats.

Tuesday, Feb 28: Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

02:30 PM - 03:15 PM

### **Threads: A Fresh Approach to EDI Through Community Education**

Threads : Une nouvelle approche de l'EDI grâce à l'éducation communautaire

Edmonton Room (2nd Floor)

**Anita Ogurlu**  
Cultural Bridging Facilitator, Saskatoon Open Door Society

Now in its third year, Threads: Cultural Conversations is a two-day cross-cultural education and arts-based virtual platform responding to the uncertain times we live in; migration across the globe, conflict and violence causing refugee crisis, the global pandemic, climate change, inequity, systemic racism and racial discrimination, the polarization of cultures into silos based on race, religion and ethnicity and the politics of binary thinking and othering. Whether for professional or personal development, Threads explores the issues, challenges and desires for Newcomers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures to live in harmony, to settle and belong anew. Participatory sessions weave together knowledge talks, art, ...



Tuesday, Feb 28: Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

02:35 PM - 02:55 PM

## Portail / Gateway - histoire de succès d'une collaboration entre organismes francophones

Portail / Gateway - success story of a collaboration between francophone organizations

Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

**Hervé Stéclébout**

Directeur général, La Cité des Rocheuses

**Liana Kalognomou**

Coordinatrice adjointe Portail, La Cité des Rocheuses

Gateway/Portail, succès d'une collaboration entre organismes francophones ayant pour objectifs l'optimisation des services d'établissement offerts aux clients à Calgary:- centralisation du SEBAA (NAARS) ; suppression de la duplication de services ; protocole de transmission d'informations recueillies des clients entre organismes ; partenariat entre Portail (la Cité des Rocheuses) et Gateway (Immigrant Services Calgary) pour la mise en place de Gateway / Portail ; Détachement d'employés de la Cité des Rocheuses dans plusieurs organismes anglophones et francophones à Calgary afin d'assurer le parcours d'intégration francophone.-Gateway/Portail, a successful collaboration between Francophone organizations to optimize settlement services for clients in Calgary:- centralization of ...

Tuesday, Feb 28: Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

02:55 PM - 03:15 PM

## La Cité des Rocheuses and Centre for Newcomers collaboration on Francophones

Collaboration entre la Cité des Rocheuses et le Centre pour nouveaux arrivants sur les francophones

Top of the Inn (11th Floor)

**Charlie Wang**

Chief Client Service Officer, Centre for Newcomers

Centre for Newcomers and La Cité des Rocheuses, both partners in Gateway project, have collaborated to help Francophone newcomers. La Cite representative now has a presence at Centre for Newcomers. This arrangement started October 2022. Alberta is seeing an influx of Francophones, many of whom are moving from Quebec. This arrangement provides Anglophone and Francophone services under one roof. Till Q3 end 43 Francophone referrals had been made to La Cite. Francophone clients can access services and programs provided by the Centre for Newcomers, while also accessing specialized services offered by La Cite des Rocheuses and other Francophone agencies. This also ...

Tuesday, Feb 28

03:15 PM - 03:30 PM

**Break // Pause**

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

03:30 PM - 04:15 PM

## Calgary Newcomers Collaborative: A Community Hub

Collectif des nouveaux arrivants de Calgary : Un carrefour communautaire

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

**Anila Lee Yuen**  
President and CEO, Centre for Newcomers

**Hervé Stéclebout**  
Directeur général, La Cité des Rocheuses

**Sally Zhao**

The Calgary Newcomer Collaborative began to form between 2016 to 2019 when Centre for Newcomers (CFN) started building collaborative models of funding in East Calgary. With particular help from The Immigrant Education Society (TIES), CFN's partnerships grew from 8 organizations to 250. In January 2020, the federal ministry Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), announced the "Zonal approach" to settlement services where CFN was the lead in East Calgary. Traditionally, the settlement sector in Calgary was isolated with each organization functioning individually, rather than in coordination with one another. This created major barriers for newcomers accessing services and the zonal ...

Tuesday, Feb 28: Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)

04:15 PM - 04:30 PM

## Summit Closing Remarks // Mot de la fin du sommet

Grand Ballroom (Main Floor)



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Un rapport proposé par

Dream Text Creative Writing Ltd.



PO Box 31 085 RPO Bridegeland, Calgary AB T2E9A3



306-807-3101



hello@dreamtextwriting.ca



www.dreamtextwriting.ca



@Frenchwriting



www.linkedin.com/company/dream-text-creative-writing