

Enhancing the Welcoming Capacity of Windsor Essex

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PRESENTATION REPORT



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PRESENTATION REPORT

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this research study was to benchmark Windsor Essex's 'welcoming capacity'. The goals of the study were to:

- Highlight the range and complexity of experiences of welcoming among newcomers and immigrants living in Windsor Essex;
- Initiate further dialogue about the state of Windsor Essex's welcoming capacity
- Provide useful direction for enhancing the welcoming capacity of Windsor Essex to newcomers and immigrants.

Using a mixed-method research design, the research team explored the welcoming capacity of Windsor Essex by examining several important benchmarks as outlined by Esses et al (2010), "Characteristics of a Welcoming Community." These benchmarks include:

- Positive community attitudes toward immigrants, cultural diversity, and the presence of newcomers in the community;
- Links between main actors working toward welcoming communities;
- Presence of diverse religious and cultural organizations;
- Social engagement opportunities;
- Opportunities for the use of public space and recreational facilities; and,
- Favourable media coverage and representation

Our analysis revealed a complex picture of Windsor Essex's welcoming capacity. Immigrants and newcomers have specific needs and experiences tied to their different status as new residents and migration and national, ethno-racial histories. However, differences between immigrants and newcomers were considerable so that they should not always be lumped together. Furthermore, many immigrants and newcomers share with other residents a sense of exclusion due to factors such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of transportation.

Our primary conclusion is that Windsor Essex demonstrates some capacity for fostering immigrant and newcomer belonging in all benchmarks, but the capacities are uneven and there are considerable gaps. Hence, we highlight points of tension that need to be dealt with in order to enhance the welcoming capacity of Windsor Essex:

- There is a positive perception towards immigrants and multiculturalism, and support for an inclusive community, but this is somewhat thin, and with a lack of deep commitment or sense of responsibility towards welcoming immigrants.
- There was also a lack of congruence between what mainstream actors and newcomers saw in terms of how well services were coordinated to support a welcoming community.
- The presence of religious and cultural organizations is a source of multicultural pride and provides community support but they are not necessarily the sites for welcoming newcomers or well connected to mainstream service providers and organizations.
- Social engagement among newcomers was relatively narrow and limited as are the opportunities to use public space and recreational facilities. Much work is required to ensure a more realistic coverage and representation of newcomers and visible minorities.
- There is a lack of knowledge in our society about newcomers and immigrants.

- Public spaces are well used by immigrants but continue to present barriers, financially, socially and in terms of how they are represented and seen as rightful occupiers of public spaces.
- Finally, immigrant frustration with media representations can be harnessed to work in line with media outlets expressed desire to include immigrant perspectives.

The welcoming of newcomers requires the support of the whole community and there is much work to be done. The overall recommendations include:

Promoting the creation and implementation of a community-based welcoming strategy towards immigrants that:

- Reflects a commitment to advance welcoming;
- Acknowledges and includes immigrant issues into all civic and public sector institutions and issues;
- Is flexible, sensitive and appropriate to specific sectors;
- Includes immigrant participation in the design and implementation of the strategy;
- Is flexible to adapt to changing immigrant patterns;
- Includes or supports a communications plan to foster relations with media, cultivate a more diverse depiction of the city and county;
- Supports the work of the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership;
- Encourages diverse stakeholders to recognize and acknowledge their own stake and leadership in welcoming immigrants and bringing together diverse stakeholders;
- Promotes social networking and engagement opportunities that integrate newcomers and long term residents;
- Provides opportunities for decision making and representation among newcomers and long term residents;
- Encourages the city and municipalities to take a greater leadership role in advancing welcoming and belonging and the social planning it requires.



Enhancing the Welcoming Capacity of Windsor Essex

Context of the Research Project: Setting the Scene

In the last decade Windsor Essex has undergone significant changes that render the region a place in transition. An economic downturn and larger global economic changes have challenged the extent to which Windsor Essex can support its current population. Currently, social and economic development initiatives are underway that are attempting to refashion the region so that it can thrive and prosper in the context of 21st century globalization.

Many understand that newcomers and immigrants play an important role in the overall development and future of the region. With this in mind, Windsor-Essex is one of more than 16 regional areas where federal initiatives have directed their attention in the effort to build immigrant capacity and support the welcoming of immigrant newcomers. All recognize that the settlement, integration, and welcoming of immigrant newcomers requires considerable investment, as well as the recognition that immigrants have much to offer this region.

This research project is part of a community-wide initiative between the University of Windsor, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology, the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County and the South Essex Community Council and is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). It emerged from the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership's strategic objective 3—"Strengthen Local Awareness and Capacity to Integrate Immigrants" (Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership, "Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership 2013- 2104 Action Plan, 2013). WELIP has acted as a community partner supporting the research throughout the project. The project seeks to enhance the newcomer and immigrant welcoming capacity of Windsor Essex by investigating and promoting the engagement of newcomers and immigrants with mainstream society.

Specifically, this OTF funded project benchmarks the welcoming capacity of Windsor Essex by examining several important benchmarks as outlined by Esses et al (2010) in their report entitled "Characteristics of a Welcoming Community." These benchmarks include:

- Positive community attitudes toward immigrants, cultural diversity, and the presence of newcomers in the community;
- Links between main actors working toward welcoming communities;
- Presence of diverse religious and cultural organizations;
- Social engagement opportunities;
- Opportunities for the use of public space and recreational facilities; and
- Favourable media coverage and representation

Please refer to Table 1: Defining the Six Benchmarks on page 12.

Using a mixed-method research design that utilized in-depth interviews, focus groups, a survey, analyses of local media, and document review, we explored the welcoming capacity of Windsor Essex by examining several important benchmarks identified by Esses et al (2010) as outlined above. The goals of the study were to highlight the range and complexity of experiences of welcoming among newcomers and immigrants living in Windsor Essex; initiate further dialogue about the state of Windsor Essex's welcoming capacity; and provide useful direction for enhancing the welcoming capacity of Windsor Essex to newcomers and immigrants.

At partnership meetings it was established that the research project should focus broadly on immigrants (primarily newcomers) and mainstream stakeholders across various domains, which are categorized as:

- Economic Development
- Community Revitalization
- Employers
- Settlement
- Education
- Social Services
- Ethnic Organizations
- Poverty Organizations
- Health
- Legal
- Municipal

The following results are intended **to explore the range and complexity of perceptions, opinions and experiences on particular issues regarding welcoming and allow us to consider areas for further research and community-based, targeted initiatives.** The involvement of multiple actors, sectors and diversity of services in welcoming immigrants, and immigrant responses, actions and experiences cannot be captured in one report, but we can point to some of these complexities. We highlight how the benchmarks are experienced, discuss the barriers that limit the welcoming capacity of the area, and point to areas that require further understanding and research. We cannot offer sector-wide evaluations, assessments, or inventory of services and access but we can highlight some of the gaps and difficulties raised through our consultations. Proposed recommendations are intended to be taken up by a range of stakeholders and we encourage municipalities, mainstream service providers and organizations to take a leadership role in this process.

Working Definitions

A welcoming community can be conceptualized as a collective effort to create a place where individuals feel valued and included (Esses et al, 2010).

The proposed project builds on the hypothesis that a sense of belonging is based on more than available language or settlement ‘services’, but rather is based on inclusion into activities and events which represent the heart of a community.

To ground and specify the way in which belonging may be developed, we include definitions of the specific ways in which we can view belonging. Belonging refers to both a sense of self and identity, and the affective, social, political and economic ties that link, including immigrants, individuals and groups to diverse domains of community life (May, 2011). The latter is underdeveloped in the Canadian context of multiculturalism and therefore opportunities for comparison are limited (Wong & Roland, 2009).

We identify **mainstream** and **immigrant** as two main categories of participants in this project; however, there are often overlaps in these categories. Mainstream participants are those who represent agencies whose service provision mandates are directed towards a broader public. We also differentiate between newcomer immigrants and immigrants. A “newcomer immigrant” is defined as someone who has moved to Canada from another country within the last five years. An “immigrant” is anyone who moved to Canada from another country.

A Profile of Immigration to Windsor Essex

Located in Southwestern Ontario, the region of Windsor and Essex County is comprised of the City of Windsor and seven county municipalities including Amherstburg, Essex, Kingsville, Lakeshore, LaSalle, Leamington, and Tecumseh. According to 2011 Census data, the region of Windsor Essex has a population of 388, 782, marking a 1.2% loss of population since 2006. The majority of residents live in the City of Windsor (209, 218). Lakeshore, with a population of 28, 746, is the largest municipality in the county, followed by Leamington (27, 138), LaSalle (25, 285), Tecumseh (24, 289), Amherstburg (20, 339), Essex (20, 085), and Kingsville (19, 619).

Windsor Essex has a rich and deep cultural history. It has a significant aboriginal history and was a central site of both French and English colonization of North America. As a reception site for black slaves both before and after the American Civil War, the Underground Railroad figures importantly in local historical accounts of the region. Throughout the 20th century, the region was an important site of immigration as many came to work in the burgeoning manufacturing sector and its related spin-off industries. Between the 1960 and 1990s, Windsor Essex saw the arrival of many European groups, including British, French, Italians, Greeks and various Eastern European groups. This period also saw the arrival of immigrants from the Middle East, most notably Lebanon. By the mid-1980s, in line with national immigration trends, Windsor Essex began receiving an increasing amount of immigrants from non-European countries.

The diversity of immigration past and present is reflected in the linguistic, religious, and ethnic diversity that comprises Windsor Essex today – and makes it exemplary of multicultural Canada. The most frequently spoken language at home in Windsor Essex is English, while the most common non-official languages include Arabic, Italian, German, Spanish, Chinese (n.o.s.), and Serbian (Census of Canada, 2011). According to the 2011 Census data, 44.5% of residents in Windsor Essex are Catholics. The next four largest religious affiliations include Anglican (5.5%), United Church (4.8%), Muslim (4.2%), and Other Christians (9.9). It is important to note that these categories do not illustrate distinctions within each category. According to the 2009 Windsor Essex County Health Unit's Population Report, over 40, 000 residents reported of being either of British or French origin, and 28, 000 as either of Italian or German origin. Approximately, 35, 000 reported 'Canadian' as their ethnic origin (p. 26). These numbers did not take into account those who identify as having several ethnic origins. Windsor Essex also has a large visible minority population, many of whom are born in the area or Canada. Arabs represent the largest visible minority group in Windsor Essex, followed by South Asians, Chinese, and blacks respectively. Similar to issues with religion, the categories of visible minority do not take into account the many differences within groups with respect to, among others, religious affiliation, ethnic origin, and whether they are immigrants or Canadian-born.

Today, Windsor Essex remains an important immigration site in Ontario. The region is often cited as one of Ontario's most important second-tier immigrant settlement destinations (Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership, 2010, p. 14). According to 2011 Census data, 21.4% of all residents in Windsor and Essex County were born outside of Canada. Twenty-six percent of all foreign-born residents currently living in Windsor Essex came to the region before 1971, 26% came between 1971 and 1990; 23.4% came between 1991 and 2001, and 24.5% arrived between 2001 and 2011. Most immigrants and newcomers to the region reside in the City of Windsor, but communities in the county, especially Leamington, also have sizeable immigrant populations. The two municipalities with the highest percentage of foreign-born residents are the City of Windsor and Leamington. Twenty-seven percent of residents living in the City of Windsor

¹Other Christian' refers to those who identify as Christian but are not Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, United church, Baptist, Lutheran, Pentecostal, or Presbyterian

residents living in the City of Windsor are immigrants, 4.1% of whom are recent immigrants. Twenty six percent of residents living in Leamington were born outside Canada, 2.8% of which are recent immigrants.

Immigrants to Windsor Essex come from all over the world. The major source countries of all immigrants to Windsor Essex, regardless of year of arrival, are the United States, Italy, United Kingdom, Lebanon, Mexico, Iraq, India, and China. However, the major source countries of recent immigrants to the region has somewhat shifted to include the United States, Iraq, China, India, Philippines, Mexico, Pakistan, and Haiti (Census of Canada, 2011). It is important to note that listing the major source countries of recent immigrants to the region does not reflect the diversity of those who came to Canada from other countries. In order to demonstrate this diversity here is a brief list of the 'source countries' of some of the people we spoke to during our research project: Somalia, Nepal, Pakistan, China, Venezuela, Lebanon, Iraq, Poland, Bangladesh, Iran, Burma, Ukraine, Israel, Kosovo, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Jordan, Argentina, Mexico, Senegal, El Salvador, Armenia, Syria, Ethiopia, Bhutan, Vietnam, India, Hungary, Nigeria, Mexico, Haiti, Croatia, Uzbekistan, Jordan, Philippines, Rwanda, China, the United States of America, Germany, Palestine, and Romania. More than one person we spoke to was 'stateless' before receiving Canadian citizenship. A list of 'source country' also does not fully explain differences regarding socioeconomic status, ethnicity, language, and religion among immigrants who may come from the same country of origin.

Newcomers to Windsor Essex come to the region through various immigration channels and government programs. Many come as economic immigrants, while others may be sponsored by family members or arrive through Canada's live-in care program. Some are 'placed' here, as is the case for some government-assisted refugees. For various reasons, many newcomers relocate to Windsor Essex after having already taken up residency in other locations throughout Canada. Many immigrants to Windsor Essex have lived in multiple countries even before taking up residency in Canada. Thus, Windsor Essex may represent one settlement destination among many. Windsor Essex also attracts a sizeable population of migrant agricultural workers who tend to live and work in the county, primarily in the greenhouse agricultural industry. While their experiences are not included in this study, their presence does have a significant impact on how welcoming and immigrants are viewed in the county and particular towns such as Leamington.

When newcomers arrive in Windsor Essex, they are directed either officially or through informal connections to various agencies that provide settlement services. It is in one or more of these sites that newcomer immigrants access services that are designed to build their capacity and, at the same time, socialize them to Canadian values.

The main settlement service providers in Windsor Essex include Windsor Women Working with Immigrant women (W5), The Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County (MCC); The New Canadians' Centre for Excellence, Inc. (NCCE, Inc.), South Essex Community Centre (SECC), YMCA, Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor, Inc., (WEST), the Unemployed Help Center, and College Boreal, the latter which provides settlement services in French. This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Most of these settlement organizations are clustered in downtown Windsor with satellite offices in strategic locations throughout the city. One organization is located in Leamington, and another has a branch in the county, also in Leamington. These settlement organizations are now joined by other organizations (i.e., school boards, colleges and university, and other community organizations) in providing key services to newcomers. Language training forms the bulk of settlement funding, but there is also significant focus on employability training. Increasingly, the diversification of settlement services across

various organizations makes the distinction of ‘settlement’ and ‘mainstream’ increasingly complex and overlapping.

The majority of settlement and language programs are funded by, and according to legislation and policy guidelines set by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). CIC guidelines define service eligibility and program parameters. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration also funds programs related to settlement, as well as an array of programs offered to all eligible residents in Ontario, including access to health care and education.

Services available to immigrants that are not funded by CIC also play a critical role in the settlement experiences of newcomers. Newcomers are entitled to many social supports offered outside of the ‘settlement’ sector, including childcare subsidies, access to housing support programs, and employment and financial assistance. These programs are delivered by the City of Windsor, which serves as the service system manager for residents of the City and County.

Importantly, settlement services are largely directed towards newcomers; but settlement and a sense of belonging to a place is a much longer process that requires wide-scale community support.

Exploring the Benchmarks: Methodology

In order to assess Windsor Essex’s welcoming capacity in relation to these identified benchmarks, a multi-method research approach was utilized, including:

- A. In-depth interviews and focus groups with newcomers and immigrants;
- B. In-depth interviews with key sector stakeholders;
- C. Analyses of local media,
- D. A survey of mainstream organizations;
- E. Systematic document review.

Please refer to Figure 1: Methodology on page 11. The use of these various methods allowed for a research approach that could capture the dynamic relationship between systemic issues influencing welcoming and belonging and the subjective experiences of newcomers and immigrants themselves. The objective of the research was to elicit the complexity of issues, perceptions and practices that inform the welcoming process and the various and overlapping categories that constitute immigration and Canadian multiculturalism.

A. Interviews and Focus Groups with Newcomers and Immigrants to Windsor-Essex

We conducted 55 in-depth interviews and 10 focus groups with newcomers and immigrants to Windsor-Essex. Through both interviews and focus groups, we interviewed a total of 122 newcomers and immigrants to the region. This number represents a relatively large number for a qualitative study. However, we wanted to include and consider the significant diversity of experiences, backgrounds, and identifications that characterize immigrants to Windsor Essex.

The newcomers and immigrants we spoke with demonstrated a range of migration experiences, came to Canada from many different countries, arrived through a diversity of migration pathways, and have resided in Canada for different lengths of time. Participants came from many different countries including Somalia, Nepal, Pakistan, China, Venezuela, Lebanon, Iraq, Poland, Bangladesh, Iran, Burma, Ukraine, Israel, Kosovo, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Jordan, Argentina, Mexico, Senegal, El Salvador, Armenia, Syria, Ethiopia, Bhutan, Vietnam,

India, Hungary, Nigeria, Mexico, Haiti, Croatia, Uzbekistan, Jordan, Philippines, Rwanda, China, the United States of America, Germany, Palestine, and Romania.

Some participants came as refugees; others were sponsored by family, came as skilled professionals, or came to Canada through live-in-care programs. For some participants, Canada was the third or sometimes even fourth country in which they have resided. Some live in Windsor Essex with their families, both immediate and extended, while others have been separated from both their immediate and extended families. Length of residence residing in Canada varied, ranging from 6 months to over 15 years. Our youngest participant was 17 years of age and our oldest was 82. Most of those we interviewed were either actively looking for work or underemployed. Sixty-five percent of our participants were female. The range of cultural backgrounds, life experiences, and migration pathways tend to reflect the general diversification of immigrants to Canada.

Drawing on the selected benchmarks, interviews and focus groups were designed to explore participants' everyday experiences of living in Windsor Essex. Topics of discussion included reasons for moving to Windsor, family, friends, employment experiences, perceptions of the community, experiences with various local institutions (e.g., schools, social services, immigration services), leisure activities, use of public space, attitudes toward multiculturalism, and feelings of belonging to Windsor.

Our sample is in no way intended to be representative of all immigrant experiences in Windsor Essex. Rather, the narratives and experiences shared with us build up a strong and rich picture of the complexities of newcomer experiences of welcoming and belonging to the region.

B. Mainstream and Settlement Sector Interviews

In addition to immigrant and newcomer interviews and focus groups, we conducted 62 interviews with sector-specific representatives and community leaders. Through these interviews we talked to a total of 70 people representing organizations from both the city and county in the following sectors: Business Improvement Associations, community revitalization groups, local employers, post-secondary educational institutions, Ethno-cultural organizations, hospitals and community-based health organizations, legal organizations, settlement services, various departments of municipal governments in both the city and county, social services, Union/Labour organizations and Economic and Workforce Development organizations.

Similar to our newcomer interviewees, mainstream and settlement sector representatives demonstrated a range of connections to the Windsor Essex region. Many of our mainstream and settlement sector participants were themselves born and raised in Windsor or Essex County, others were born in Canada but outside Windsor-Essex, and still some were themselves immigrants to Canada. Drawing on the selected benchmarks and goals of the project, we asked participants to share their perceptions on the welcoming capacity of Windsor Essex and explore the challenges and opportunities of linking newcomers to 'mainstream' organizations and residents of Windsor Essex in order to enhance the welcoming capacity of the region.

C. Local Media Analysis

One way of exploring issues of representation is to analyze the way multiculturalism, cultural diversity, and immigrants and newcomers are depicted in local mainstream media (see Benchmark 6). The Windsor Star has been circulating in the region for the past 123 years. Currently, it is offered in print and online, and publishes six days a week. According to joint research conducted by the Canadian Newspaper Association and the Canadian Community

Newspaper Association, in 2012 the Windsor Star circulated on average 313, 017 print newspapers per week. According to its own website, the Windsor Star enjoys on an online visitor base of 219, 000 (Newspapers Canada, n.d.). As the only daily newspaper in circulation in the region, the Windsor Star remains a key source of information about local issues and events and an important resource for community knowledge.

To assess representations of newcomers and immigrants, we performed two types of analyses on the Windsor Star:

1. Representations of multiculturalism.

In addition to the examination of the Windsor Star's narration of locality as outlined above, a database search of the newspaper, using the keyword 'multiculturalism', was also conducted. The database search revealed that 204 articles containing the word 'multiculturalism' appeared in the Windsor Star between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2012. From these 204 articles, 85 editorials, columns, and letters to the editor were selected for in-depth thematic analysis. The purpose of this analysis was to identify how multiculturalism was framed in relation to Windsor-Essex as a place.

2. Representations of immigrants and refugees.

A database search of the Windsor Star, using the keywords 'immigration', and 'refugee', was also conducted. The database search revealed 309 articles containing the word 'immigration' and 151 articles containing the word 'refugee' appeared in the Windsor Star between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2012. These articles were subjected to a thematic analysis. The purpose of this analysis was to identify the ways immigration and refugee migration was framed in relation to Windsor-Essex as a place.

D. Survey

In collaboration with our partners, we distributed a short survey to local organizations. The survey had the following objectives:

- Assess the degree to which organizations across sectors interface with immigrants and newcomers;
- Evaluate the extent to which these organizations engage in outreach to immigrants and newcomers; and
- Understand the level of mainstream organizational commitment to diversity and inclusion.

A total of 72 organizations from both the city and the county representing the various target sectors for this research project completed the survey. Please note that the results of the survey are not included in this report but will be included in the final version of the research report.

E. Document Review

A systematic review of policy documents, community reports, and academic journal articles was also conducted.

The purpose of this document review was to:

- Establish general trends in settlement and immigrant integration in Canada and Ontario;
- Assess the overall policy context within which welcoming initiatives unfold;
- Understand how other communities, both similar and different to Windsor Essex, have implemented welcoming initiatives in their communities; and
- Compile examples of best and promising practices in welcoming newcomers and immigrants

Figure 1: Methodology

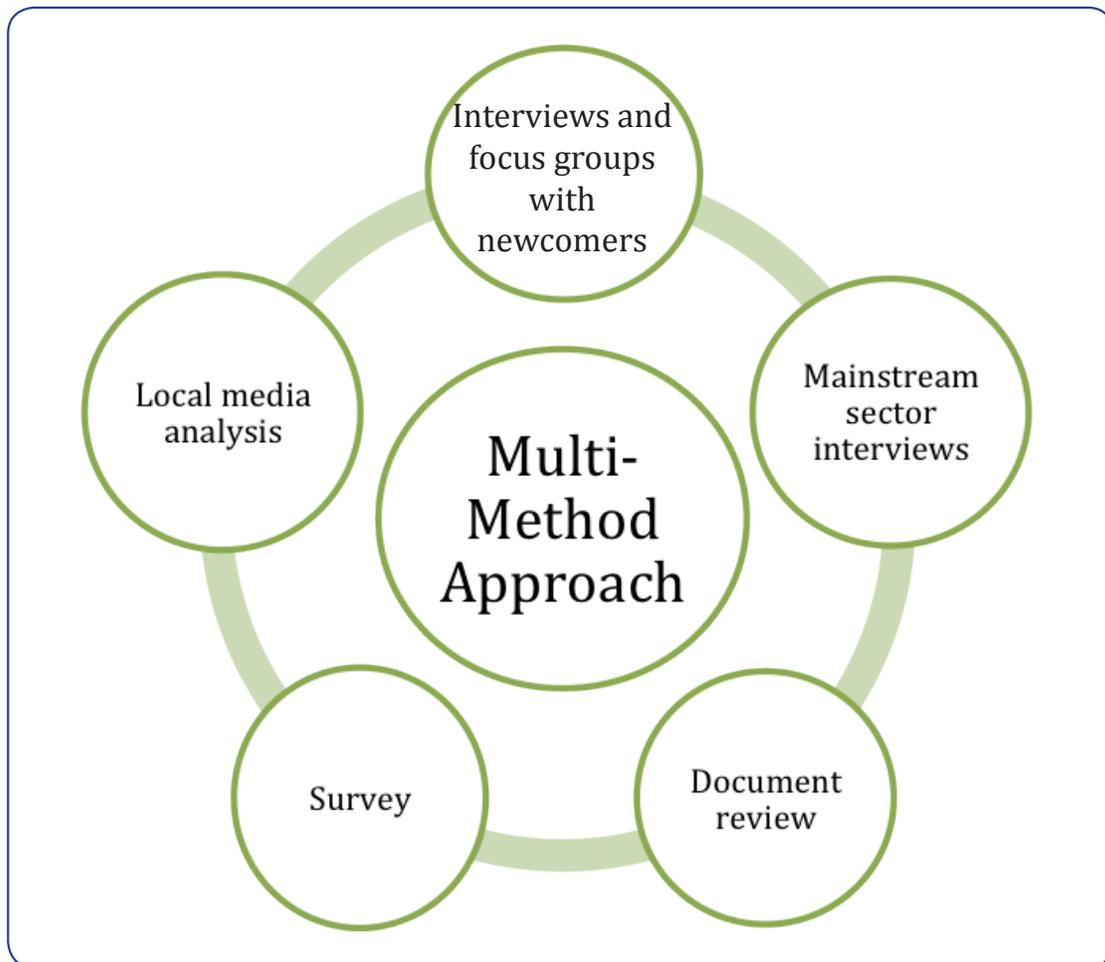


Table 1: Defining the Six Benchmarks

Defining the Six Benchmarks	
Benchmark 1: Positive Community Attitudes Toward Immigrants, Cultural Diversity, and the Presence of Newcomers in the Community	“Positive attitudes can be seen in feelings, opinions, and/or behaviours toward newcomers. They are important to consider because attitudes can determine the public's reactions toward newcomers” (Esses et al., 2010, p. 34).
Benchmark 2: Links between Main Actors working toward Welcoming Communities	“Links refer to connections that involve cooperation, information, and resource sharing. Main actors who can shape a welcoming community include community members, service providing organizations, regional governments (e.g., municipalities), and provincial and federal governments” (Esses et al., 2010, p. 44).
Benchmark 3: Presence of diverse religious and cultural organizations	“More than ever, the presence of religious organizations should be considered when describing the characteristics of a welcoming community. In fact . . . participation in religious services was found to be an important predictor of whether immigrants indicated that their expectations had been met in Canada, and whether they would make the decision to come to Canada again” (Esses et al., 2010, p. 66).
Benchmark 4: Social Engagement Opportunities	“Social engagement opportunities are closely linked to social networking because they represent connections with community members. In the absence of family or friends, two types of connections serve as primary sources of assistance – social engagement and networking – providing informal access to information and social support” (Esses et al., 2010, p. 69).
Benchmark 5: Opportunities for the use of Public Space and Recreational Facilities	“Public spaces and facilities – such as parks, town squares, public libraries, and public community/ recreation facilities – are areas that, by definition, are open and accessible to all community members. Use of public space and participation in community/ recreation centres are important because they provide opportunities for newcomers to become integrated into the community” (Esses et al, 2010, p. 86).
Benchmark 6: Favourable Media coverage and representation	“‘Media’ is best described as a medium where information is shared and communicated, and includes radio, television, newspapers, and internet sources. The media is also used for the purpose of disseminating (and not just exchanging) information. The power of mass media rests in its ability to (1) influence recipients’ perceptions of newcomers and immigration, and (2) act as a tool that immigrants and refugees can use to gain information and to gauge society’s perceptions of newcomers” (Esses et al., 2010, p. 90)

Findings from Interviews, Focus Groups, and Local Media Analyses²

The following section outlines the major findings from in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted with newcomers, immigrants, and mainstream organization representatives, as well as our local media analyses. We organize the findings according to the specified benchmarks that guided this study. After presenting the major themes that emerged from interviews and focus groups, we highlight concluding themes and offer recommendations for each benchmark. Please note that pseudonyms are used for the quotes provided in this section.

It should be noted that although these benchmarks represent distinct categories of analysis, in practice they are all inter-related. For example, community attitudes toward immigrants may be impacted by the degree of intercultural social connections found in a community or by the prevalence of positive and negative media representations.



²Please note that survey results are not reported in this document. These results will be included in final version of the research report.

Benchmark 1: Positive Community Attitudes Toward Immigrants, Cultural Diversity, and the Presence of Newcomers in the Community

“Positive attitudes can be seen in feelings, opinions, and/or behaviours toward newcomers. They are important to consider because attitudes can determine the public’s reactions toward newcomers” (Esses et al., 2010, p. 34).

Mainstream

Multiculturalism and Diversity

- Majority of participants supported multiculturalism, viewed diversity as a positive feature of Canadian society, recognized the cultural diversity of Windsor-Essex, and identified diversity as a positive feature of the region.
- However, a small number of participants perceived multiculturalism as a superficial commitment to diversity. They expressed that a commitment to multiculturalism requires addressing systemic forms of inequality such as poverty, sexism, and racism.
- Among those in the business sector ‘diversity of skill’ more so than cultural diversity was seen as an important attribute of business success.
- The Carousel of Nations festival was highlighted as an important event celebrating the cultural diversity of Windsor-Essex. However, some felt that such a festival ‘tokenized’ or exoticized minority cultures.

Perceptions of the Welcoming Nature of Windsor Essex

- Most who self-identified as ‘Windsorites’ felt that Windsor and Essex towns were very welcoming places. Windsor Essex was described as a place where everyone knows everyone and where you meet people you know on a daily or weekly basis.
- Most who were not born in Windsor and came as immigrants or from elsewhere in Canada felt that Windsor was less welcoming, that Windsor was a ‘hard town to break into’ or that it took many years to feel a part of Windsor.
 - ✓ Of this group, several identified that after many years of residence however, they NOW felt very connected and hence viewed Windsor as a very welcoming place.

Immigrants, Immigration and Immigrant Integration

- Knowledge about immigrants and newcomers was quite limited. However, a minority were quite knowledgeable about newcomer issues and challenges. Some participants themselves were immigrants and drew on their own experiences of settlement when discussing issues of immigration and settlement.
- Many saw attracting and retaining professional and skilled immigrants as an important means of creating global economic connections and revitalizing the city.
- While the ‘business model’ approach towards immigrants was largely favoured, several participants pointed out that it was not mutually exclusive of a social, humanitarian approach towards immigrants. They pointed out that a business approach should not undercut our attention to the social and cultural context of immigrant experiences and the social and cultural resources that immigrants and their family members bring to Windsor Essex.

- Many participants supported the idea that the integration of immigrants was a “two-way street” that required efforts from both mainstream actors and newcomers themselves.
- However, most saw ‘immigrant integration’, including the actual work of integration, to be primarily the responsibility of immigrants and immigrant-serving agencies.
- The social exclusion of and persistent negative community attitudes toward migrant workers in the county were highlighted by some as a major ongoing concern.

Recognition in Cultural Life

While most had positive community attitudes towards multiculturalism and diversity, there was significant ambivalence and differing views about diversity as a key feature of Windsor as a city.

- ✓ Several respondents – particularly those who viewed themselves as ‘visible minorities’ or were immigrants themselves indicated that they did not feel recognized as part of the cultural fabric of Windsor, or could point to specific instances where that was the case. For example, they commented on the absence of diversity in mainstream workplaces or feeling like an outsider during casual walks along the riverfront
- ✓ Many recognized that ethno-cultural diversity or immigrants were not represented or visibly present in their neighbourhoods, workplaces or social networks.
- ✓ Some mainstream actors expressed feeling uncomfortable when migrant farm workers congregated in public spaces, while others recognized the contributions migrant workers make to the local community.

Newcomers and Immigrants

Perceptions and Experiences of Multiculturalism and Cultural Diversity

- Many conveyed that multiculturalism was a key feature of Canadian society that made them feel positive towards their decision to settle in Canada.
- Some newcomers expressed enjoyment in meeting people from other cultures and nations. Many also expressed the difficulties of how to “act” in multicultural settings. Others came from countries that were culturally diverse and were already accustomed to living in culturally diverse settings.

Perceptions of the Welcoming Nature of Windsor Essex

- Immigrants expressed a range of perceptions on the welcoming nature of Windsor Essex, for example:
 - ✓ Some expressed feeling welcomed in Windsor and commented on the friendly nature of Windsor’s residents; but many viewed this friendliness as somewhat superficial.
 - ✓ Others relayed stories of street-level discrimination through name calling, funny-looks, and being told to “go back home.”
 - ✓ Some highlighted experiences of employment discrimination or difficulties in finding employment as contributing to feelings of being unwelcomed.
 - ✓ Many immigrants felt excluded from the cultural life, while others lauded Windsor’s inclusiveness.

- ✓ Immigrant youth expressed ambivalence about their future in the region. Some saw Windsor as a welcoming place in which they saw themselves building a future, while others did not. Lack of job opportunities and discrimination (or a combination of the two) were most often cited by immigrant youth as the reasons for not wanting to stay in Windsor. However, for some discrimination was not unique to Windsor Essex but a general feature of Canadian society.
- The availability of immigrant and newcomer services was identified as a key feature in feeling welcomed. Overall, immigrants and newcomers were very complimentary of settlement services.

Immigrants, Immigration and Immigrant Integration

- Most respondents understood, and many emphasized the importance of integrating into Canadian and local social and cultural life. This was reflected in their attitudes to schooling and the social life of their children; ways of living, working and interacting; some viewed this as a very necessary and important feature of becoming Canadian.
- Yet, many held conflicting views on what integration means in practice. They recognized tensions and conveyed the importance of a balance in maintaining key cultural values, ways of living, parenting, or socially interacting.
- A minority expressed the more dynamic view – that integration is a two-way street– that requires the engagement of long-time residents and stakeholders.
- Very few were critical of the imperative to integrate.
- Securing employment was seen by most as the key pathway to integration.

Recognition in Cultural Life

- Many conveyed a strong sense of responsibility for depicting or representing themselves in positive ways to the community.
- The presence of diverse cultural groups made some immigrants feel that they were represented in the cultural life of Windsor.
- Some felt that they were not fully included in the cultural life of Windsor Essex. These participants described Windsor as a particularly white space, where Canadian born residents represented the center of community life and visible minorities and immigrants represented the outside or periphery.
- Several immigrants felt very comfortable living in smaller communities in Essex. However, the discussion about the county was overshadowed by the presence of migrant farm workers.
- Some newcomers who lived in the county reported not wanting to be perceived as migrant workers

What Immigrants Said:

*“The community can help you: The YMCA community, Five (W5) community, language community, library community. Everyplace that I can go is community. The community helps you and I am very proud [of] Windsor.... Because I was not treated badly.”
(Hussein, Somalia)*

“Even here people are so busy with their own . . . You do your thing and they are not harassing you . . . [I]t's not like you're not welcome or something like that. It's just individual doing your own thing. I mean it takes time for me to really understand whether we are welcome or not welcome. You know it, when you close contact - you come

to know these things, whether you're accepted in the group or not. Assimilation at different levels is there. They say something like 'inner circle outer', so when it comes to just accepting as friends and all there is a different issue all together. When you have to be a part of their distinct group an inner group then it becomes tough. You know that acceptance is not there. So there are different levels. It's not a simple question and an answer, it goes into many aspects." (Jessica, India)

Concluding Themes

- There is a positive perception towards immigrants and multiculturalism but this is somewhat thin. These views are not well connected to knowledge of immigrants, immigrant issues or how immigrants contribute to the positive characterization of Windsor Essex as a welcoming region.
- There is a general support for an inclusive community in principle but very little in terms of an overall sense of responsibility or commitment to welcoming immigrants.

Recommendations

- Stakeholders can take up the mantle of promoting in their own spheres of life (beyond the settlement sector) a greater awareness of the importance of a welcoming community and the value of diversity.
- Positive attitudes should be deepened and strengthened through targeted, tailored initiatives that acknowledge and address systemic issues of racism, and the invisibility of immigrants and cultural diversity, build greater knowledge and understanding of immigrants and newcomers and advance the contribution of immigrants to the cultural, social and economic fabric of Windsor Essex.



Benchmark 2: Links between Main Actors working toward Welcoming Communities (E & J)

“Links refer to connections that involve cooperation, information, and resource sharing. Main actors who can shape a welcoming community include community members, service providing organizations, regional governments (e.g., municipalities), and provincial and federal governments. Because services are generally organized in a ‘vertical’ manner while integration is holistic, creating and maintaining links between these actors should facilitate the settlement of newcomers and increase the likelihood of successful integration within the community” (Esses et al., 2010, p. 44).

Mainstream

Sector Sensitivity to Newcomers and Immigrants

- Sectors demonstrated some sensitivity to newcomer/immigrant issues, but more so within the community or client-based arm of the sectors. For example:
 - ✓ Legal sector representatives demonstrated a significant awareness of legal and bureaucratic challenges immigrants face in their efforts to legitimate their status and claim entitlements.
 - ✓ Health sector representatives were keenly sensitive to various barriers newcomers faced with respect to accessing health services. Many identified strategic efforts being taken to improve health care access issues for newcomers. There were several examples of awareness regarding specific culture practices and norms regarding illness, wellness and familial norms in caretaking
 - ✓ Recent initiatives within the municipality show that increased sensitivity is on the radar screen particularly through income maintenance officers for specialized immigrant caseloads in the Social Services Department; but these could be more greatly integrated into a wider range of services and practices.
- Some mainstream actors who themselves were immigrants, whose personal history was somehow connected to an immigration experience, or who had experiences working with immigrants often advocated for increasing their organization's sensitivity to immigrant issues. But this advocacy was done within the scope of the organization's mandate.

Knowledge of Immigrant Issues and Settlement Sector

- Knowledge of immigrant issues was very uneven. As with sensitivity to immigrant issues, those in closer contact with the issues or with immigrants as clients were more likely to be knowledgeable than those who were not. Overall however, mainstream actors demonstrated partial or limited understanding of immigrant and newcomer issues.
- The client relationship was the most dominant lens through which mainstream actors understood immigrants. This meant that many demonstrated only a partial understanding of the lives of newcomers, and that newcomers were often associated with 'problems' that needed to be addressed.
- There is limited knowledge among mainstream actors regarding what the settlement sector does or how the rules and practices that govern settlement agencies limits the degree of their service to newcomers and immigrants.

Collaborations with Settlement Sector

- Collaboration between mainstream organizations and settlement sector most often took the form of one-to-one partnerships with specific settlement organizations centered on specific initiatives.
- WELIP was mentioned as an important forum as a site for knowledge-exchange and developing networks, collaborations, and linkages.
 - ✓ An integrated approach, however, was somewhat hampered by, among other things, a rotation of participants from the mainstream sector, and the absence of decision-makers at the WELIP table.
 - For example, stakeholders outside of settlement are not as active in WELIP as the main settlement agencies.
 - Some workers assume that these issues are taken care of by the organizational arm or a specific person hired to tend to immigrant issues.
- There is some contradiction and different views in the way newcomer and immigrant needs are understood that inhibits collaboration. There are also areas of overlap between settlement and mainstream organizations are not clearly detailed or worked through.
 - ✓ Who is responsible for outreach, agenda-setting, specific initiatives, and practices regarding newcomers and immigrants?
 - ✓ How is responsibility to newcomers and immigrants built into the agendas of mainstream organizations?
- There is a gap in understanding of what newcomers are eligible for, what settlement provides to newcomers and what happens to newcomers once they are no longer eligible for settlement services.

How newcomers/immigrants interface with mainstream organizations

- Newcomers interfaced with mainstream organizations primarily as service users or clients.
- Few organizations tracked newcomer/immigrant representation of employees, but many described their workplace as 'diverse'.
- Most recognized that newcomers and immigrants were under-represented on their boards, committees, or working groups.
- Many organizations reported that they participate in cultural competency or sensitivity trainings.

Newcomers and Immigrants

Perceptions Settlement Services

- **Newcomers were generally positive and complimentary about settlement services.**
 - ✓ Some commented on receiving contradictory information from different settlement services.

Links to Employment and Education

- **Overwhelming Response:** Newcomers want more help with linking to employment opportunities, internships that promised future employment, professionally-oriented trainings, and/or educational opportunities.
 - ✓ Lack of Canadian Experience was often mentioned and explained both as discrimination and as the lack of linkages with mainstream networks, or cultural

insider knowledge that can only be obtained through interaction with the mainstream.

- ✓ Newcomers are willing to volunteer in order to obtain the necessary know-how, networks, or Canadian Experience to access employment.

What Immigrants Said:

"The services for newcomers are wonderful. Yes, they are the best. Because these people work for the newcomers. They help newcomers, they make many things for newcomers. If you have a problem they help you. The people here are wonderful, the best. But when you go outside the school to other place you have the barrier. It's not the same." (Andres, Columbia)

"I am here since first of September 2000. I started working as a volunteer with Multicultural Council, Children's Aid Society, Windsor Library, YMCA, New Canadian Centre of Excellence, one thing was left, Windsor fire department, now I am working with the Windsor fire department as well, as a volunteer. And I want to work, I was working with United Way as well. I was in Windsor WEST [settlement organization]." (Mohammed, Pakistan)

"Good community over here but main thing you have to have the job, proper job . . . You have to get into a workplace or some kind of involvement in the city, somewhere so you get to know people, you feel that you know. That sense of belonging. So when you are not active in this kind of thing you still feel you are newcomer. . . Welcoming environment for me? I look at it this way. People come for opportunity, those opportunities should be given to them . . . Then integration becomes easier . . . Can I say I am a true Canadian, right now? No. Maybe in the future. It all belongs down to the front level, then you are proud of saying it, I am a Canadian and I am doing so well." (Mohammed, Pakistan)

"They should, or I think, they should organize some programs, technical programs with where they [newcomers] can enroll." (Bishal, Nepal)

Concluding Themes

- There is a significant disparity between mainstream and immigrant actors' assessment of the linkages and interactions between mainstream and newcomers.
 - ✓ Mainstream actors mostly believe that they are sensitive to newcomers, and attempt to collaborate with settlement organizations in order to enhance welcoming. Immigrants, despite the relatively low level of expectations from mainstream services, see gaps in communication, collaboration and resource sharing that limit their access to, for example, employment networks

Recommendations

- Increase community capacity of sharing information and resources through greater knowledge and appreciation of immigrant contributions, not just their needs.
- Promote awareness of immigrants and newcomers as full members of the society in all spheres of life, not just as clients.
- Build capacity within the mainstream organizations to integrate diverse immigrant perspectives, needs, and representation through the creation of social planning bodies and more wide-ranging Community-based Advisory Committees.

- Encourage municipalities to play supportive and the appropriate leadership role in this process.
- Promote internship trainings that have direct links to future employment.

Benchmark 3: Presence of diverse religious and cultural organizations

“More than ever, the presence of religious organizations should be considered when describing the characteristics of a welcoming community. In fact . . . participation in religious services was found to be an important predictor of whether immigrants indicated that their expectations had been met in Canada, and whether they would make the decision to come to Canada again” (Esses et al., 2010, p. 66). The research team however added the presence of ethno-cultural organizations to this benchmark.

Mainstream

Presence of religious organizations

- Many recognized that geographical visibility of places of worship is a symbol of Windsor's diversity.
- Many cited the presence of cultural organizations as evidence of the area's diversity and tolerance.
- Muslims were most often cited in the discussion of religious communities.
- Some religious groups were perceived as more demanding and in need of more accommodation (for example, prayer space and 'religious' attire were off-cited examples of our multiculturalism over-accommodating some groups).

Ethno-cultural organizations

- Ethno-cultural organizations were inconsistent in their connection and sensitivity to newcomer issues.
- While it needs more study, so far, ethno-cultural organizations did not appear to be well connected to settlement or mainstream organizations.
 - ✓ Links between immigrant/mainstream organizations and ethno-cultural organizations was thin, ad hoc or based on personal ties.
 - ✓ These links were not reflected in the more structured connections that mainstream organizations have with other agencies or population groups.

Newcomers and Immigrants

- Religious institutions played a very significant role in newcomer settlement and the establishment of important community connections. Religious organizations were a key site for newcomers to make social connections and friends (both within and across cultural groups), receive social and emotional support, and learn about diversity within religious communities and the wider community.
- For many, religion plays a central role in maintaining a sense of one's identity, often with pride even when the religious community is not perceived positively by the larger society.
- Religious institutions provide social services informally and sometimes more formally
- Newcomers display complex perspectives on religion to show it is a flexible and multi-

layered feature of their lives: Some newcomers point out that people lump 'culture' with religion; religion, it is explained, is a flexible framework that allows the community to develop its culture and enhance its strength and capacity, while cultures may have developed some practices that are out-dated and require modification. Religion, at its heart is a way of life that allows them to face the world.

What Immigrants Said:

"[Church] keeps me sane. I mean, you miss them you know you miss them, and the people there have food, they help me. [If] they don't see me, for a while they call finding out what's, are you okay. Christmas time they give us stuff, give voucher. They have so many activities. I think they do for single mothers, bringing your car for oil change and things." (Natalia, Nigeria)

Concluding Themes

- Religious institutions are seen as both a sign of multiculturalism and diversity but also a potential for problems
 - ✓ For example, the presence of a vibrant Islamic community was a source of pride for both mainstream and immigrant actors. However, many also raised the idea of 'too much diversity' where Muslims are concerned.
- Religious institutions play an important role in the lives of many newcomers for different reasons. Some newcomers interact with these institutions because they provide important social supports that help with mediating the stresses of migration and settlement. For others, these institutions are important places to express their faith. There are also newcomers for whom religious institutions are not important and therefore they do not interact with them.
- Ethno-cultural organizations vary in their engagement with newcomers and there are indications that they do not necessarily view newcomers as central to their agenda. This insight begs further study.

Recommendations

- Foster and increase knowledge of the importance of religious organizations, especially Islamic ones, in supporting respective communities and enhancing integration and citizenship.
- Create more robust linkages between newcomers, ethno-cultural associations, religious organizations, settlement organizations and mainstream organizations.



Benchmark 4: Social Engagement Opportunities

“Social engagement opportunities are closely linked to social networking because they represent connections with community members. In the absence of family or friends, two types of connections serve as primary sources of assistance – social engagement and networking – providing informal access to information and social support. While agencies can provide settlement services, they may not be able to address the isolation that newcomers may feel in the absence of social ties and connections within the community” (Esses et al., 2010, p. 69).

Mainstream

Participation and engagement in community life

- Work is an important site for social engagement for mainstream actors; nevertheless, their social engagement opportunities are much more varied than newcomers’.
- Mainstream actors’ engagement with visible minorities and immigrant is very limited unless tied to work. For example, mainstream actors with well-established career opportunities also find themselves with fewer social networking opportunities outside of work but their ‘Canadian’ status is sufficient social capital to carve out their career and status in the city.
- ‘Windsorites’ in particular have strong social and familial ties that reflect their deep connection to Windsor. Their social networks are often over-lapping which permits them access to multiple social worlds and the opportunities, feedback, connections that accrue from this.

Mainstream Neighbours and Neighbourhoods

- Most lived in neighbourhoods that were described as not very diverse or had very few immigrant households.
- Those who came from outside Windsor or were immigrants themselves indicated they formed friendships with other immigrants and outsiders who were more open to connecting, in particular as parents and through their children and their children’s activities.

Newcomers and Immigrants

Participation and engagement in community life

- There were significant differences among immigrants with respect to their personal contacts, friendship ties, and access to mainstream actors and organizations.
- Newcomer participation in society was influenced by various factors, including personal dispositions, unique migration pathways, employment, cohesiveness and size of the ethnic community, and language skills.
- The stress of settlement and the inability to find employment were highlighted as significant factors limiting participation and engagement in community life.
- Racism and discrimination were also cited as a key reason for limited participation.
- Many newcomers reported wanting to have more connection with ‘real Canadians’ and expressed different reasons for wanting these connections.
- Many if not most newcomers were transnationally connected and many held ties with kin or friends in the US, their places of birth, Europe, and Australia.

Employment

- Newcomers and immigrants viewed employment as the most important pathway to participation in society.
- They cited various system barriers to gaining employment, including, deskilling, discrimination, lack of social connection, less than proficient English, and lack of Canadian experience requirements.
- They recognized and advanced the idea that social connections are crucial to obtaining employment and feel marginalized from these types of connections.
- University and colleges could provide greater information and access to newcomers. At this point their focus is directed towards international students. Many international students however arrive with families or spouses which somewhat blurs the distinction between these two immigrant groups.
- Several newcomers showed a limited understanding of educational barriers and employment opportunities particular to Windsor.
 - ✓ In some cases, this was due to limited research on their part. In other cases, it was due to overly generalized information on Canada available to them before they immigrated.
- In some cases, newcomers felt that Canadian opportunities were misrepresented or the barriers were not reasonably represented. This was particularly the case for immigrants who came to Canada through the professional or skilled workers programs.

Civic Participation and Volunteerism

- Despite employment limitations many of the newcomers were very involved in Canadian society through different avenues, especially through volunteering. However, many expressed feeling that these contributions were not recognized by the larger community.
- Newcomers often participate in volunteer work, but do not think of it as such. To many, volunteering was understood as an ethic of 'helping out' rather than a formal practice.
- Some indicated that volunteer opportunities were limited and that it was unclear how to access them.

Importance of Settlement Services in Facilitating Participation

- Newcomers applauded settlement services for their ability to help them participate in wider society. Coming to settlement service centers lessened feelings of isolation and allowed newcomers to engage in activities beyond their own families.
- For some, settlement organizations provided the key means of social connection in their early years of settlement.
- Newcomers saw settlement programs as providing important social supports and friendship opportunities. These settlement services provided important opportunities for inter-cultural friendship building. Outside of settlement services, however, many newcomers' close friends were from their own ethno-cultural or religious communities.
- Although it begs more research, immigrants are somewhat 'cut-off' when they are no longer eligible for settlement services.

Newcomers' Neighbors and Neighbourhoods

- Although many newcomers lived in diverse neighborhoods with Canadian born residents, most neighbourhood friendships were described as "hi/bye" relationships. Many newcomers commented on how these superficial neighbourhood connections

differed from their home countries.

- Some newcomers reported having developed strong relationships with their Canadian neighbors. These neighbors often provided knowledge and advice to newcomers. In these cases newcomers were extremely grateful when Windsor residents reached out to them, in some cases through their children or demands of schooling and related activities.

What Immigrants Said:

"I just want to make friends and connect to them and introduce myself. I want to know about them and if any social activities are going on over here, I just want to be a part of it, that's it." (Pekash, Nepal)

"Somebody told me he was not giving me a job because I have an accent. I passed the first round, went to the second interview and you know what the company told me: "You have an accent. I'm sorry." I was shocked. I'm beginning to feel I am being discriminated against . . . They say Windsor is a multicultural city but I am going through all these experiences . . . I know it's multicultural, but you are not acting like it." (Natalia, Nigeria)

Concluding Themes

- Immigrants – particularly newcomers -- and mainstream actors have separate spheres of engagement.
- Mainstream participants who are themselves immigrants are however very connected and engaged and demonstrate clear pathways, strategies and insights into how they were able to feel a sense of belonging.
- Immigrants' opportunities are more limited so that they have less access to knowledge and support necessary for establishing themselves.
- Social networking is limited for all residents who come from elsewhere.
- Settlement sector and some stakeholder organizations mediate social networking and encounters.
- An increase in social networking opportunities requires investment from mainstream and immigrant actors.

Recommendations

- Enhance social networking opportunities through promoting better understanding of newcomers as citizens in all aspects of life in their city and neighbourhood, and not just as needy newcomers.
- Realizing these opportunities require investment from both mainstream and immigrant actors.
- Targeted initiatives directed towards building immigrant/newcomers/mainstream interface, such as Dialogue , Connection or Social Network cafes where newcomers connect with 'Canadians' and/or long-time Windsor Essex residents.
- Profile established immigrants to map out how they made connections in order to illustrate the opportunities and challenges they faced.

Benchmark 5: Opportunities for the use of Public Space and Recreational Facilities

“Public spaces and facilities – such as parks, town squares, public libraries, and public community/recreation facilities – are areas that, by definition, are open and accessible to all community members. Use of public space and participation in community/recreation centres are important because they provide opportunities for newcomers to become integrated into the community” (Esses et al, 2010, p. 86).

Mainstream

Accessibility

- Mainstream actors see efforts being made to ensure that all community members (not just immigrants) are able to access public spaces and services. If there is an area of need, it usually is an issue of fiscal and logistical constraints more than the desire to improve accessibility.
- Mainstream actors see the visibility of newcomers in public spaces (Riverside, downtown, libraries) as indicators immigrants are welcomed in our public spaces.

Migrant workers and the County

- Some mainstream actors expressed feeling uncomfortable when migrant farm workers congregated in public spaces, while others recognized the contributions migrant workers make to the local community.
-

Newcomers and Immigrants

Neighbourhood Location Matters

- Newcomers demonstrated varying socio-spatial connections to the city and region.
 - ✓ Newcomers who lived near the downtown area reported ease in accessing various leisure facilities, municipal and/or settlement services.
 - ✓ On the other hand, newcomers living in the east of the city, particularly near Forest Glade area, seemed to be the most isolated from various social services, leisure facilities, and amenities of the city, particularly those offered in the downtown core.
 - ✓ Newcomers in the county pointed to value of smaller towns in supporting leisure activities, but also that these services were uneven and in some cases costly.

Leisure activities are expensive

- Newcomers expressed that the high cost of leisure-activities limited their ability and their family's ability to participate.

Use and knowledge of public space is limited

- Immigrants and newcomers like the fact that Windsor has a lot of parks and public spaces. Contradictorily, many of those who we spoke with had very limited knowledge of and/or opportunity to use public spaces.
- Public libraries and the Riverfront area were highlighted by many newcomers as the two most important, and sometimes the only, public space available for recreation and family time.
- Some immigrants said they did not always feel comfortable in these spaces in terms of the way they were looked at as if they did not belong.

Public transportation

- Immigrants and newcomers felt public transportation was good but expensive.
- Those living outside the downtown core expressed dissatisfaction with the available routes.
- Newcomers and immigrants in both the City of Windsor and the county reported that lack of adequate transportation prevented them from securing available employment, education, and leisure opportunities.

What Immigrants Said:

“For enjoyment we don't have that many place to goes. When you go to any place you need to pay—always to pay. The only we go to park, to enjoy park. To walk. To go to the Riverside. Is very beautiful. Sometime we go to dinner with our son.” (Andres, Columbia)

“If the weather is good going to walk in the Riverside. We don't go in the street or something because everything expensive. Don't have a lot of money. It is not so interest for us because we like it but we don't have the money. Sometime we don't have free time. Sunday we go into church.” (Fareeha, Iraq)

Concluding Themes

- Immigrants and newcomers have more to say about their public spaces than mainstream actors as these are the socially and economically affordable sites where they can begin to engage meaningfully. Perhaps these spaces are more crucial to them than mainstream actors because of some of the difficulties they experience and that they are more bound to these public places than others.
- Lack of adequate transportation prevented many newcomers and immigrants from accessing employment, education, and leisure opportunities.

Recommendations

- More research needs to be done in mapping out public spaces and immigrant concentration, and exploring immigrant personal and geographical spaces in relation to the activities immigrant engage in.
- Engage immigrants in planning and decision-making process associated with public space, transportation, and leisure activities.



Benchmark 6: Favourable Media Coverage and Representations

“‘Media’ is best described as a medium where information is shared and communicated, and includes radio, television, newspapers, and internet sources. The media is also used for the purpose of disseminating (and not just exchanging) information. The power of mass media rests in its ability to (1) influence recipients’ perceptions of newcomers and immigration, and (2) act as a tool that immigrants and refugees can use to gain information and to gauge society’s perceptions of newcomers” (Esses et al., 2010, p. 90).

Mainstream

- Some saw the local media as generally positive towards visible minorities and immigrants, while others felt local media negatively portrayed immigrants and newcomers.
- Some claimed that the media did not devote time, space or people to understanding immigrants issues and they were contacted for sound bites only, not for deeper understanding of an immigrant issue.
- Some of these reservations include the portrayal of immigrants either as problematic or celebratory, but not as everyday people.
- Media outlets are also seen as business enterprises and therefore may not always be socially responsible, but are not deliberate in their portrayal of immigrants.

Newcomers and Immigrants

- Many newcomers, especially those with limited language skills did not pay attention to local media and were unable to comment.
- Newcomers are not generally critical of media portrayal; however many point out the misrepresentations of visible minorities and third world peoples.
 - ✓ Several commented on how they felt that immigrants were either absent or negatively portrayed in local media coverage. Some participants expressed particular concern over the negative portrayal of immigrants as “lazy” or “system abusers.”
 - ✓ Newcomers also expressed concern over the coverage of their home countries and population since this affects how they themselves are perceived in Windsor.
- Ethno-cultural organizations vary in their resource ability, willingness and values regarding the media and do not engage with the media as much as they could.
- Reading newspapers is an activity encouraged in settlement and employment organizations. Thus, many see the media as an important source of information and resource in their paths towards citizenship.

Key Findings from Local Media Analyses

Representation of multiculturalism

- Issues of multiculturalism, diversity, and immigration did not figure predominantly in our sample of local section newspaper articles (as discussed above).
- A range of discourses about multiculturalism were detected. Interestingly, most editorials, columns, opinion pieces and letters discussed multiculturalism at a national

and international level. Few editorials, columns, and letters made explicit reference to local issues of diversity, immigration, or multiculturalism.

- Positive discourses argued that multiculturalism was a central aspect of Canada's and Windsor's heritage and identity.
- Criticism of Canadian multiculturalism took the form of three distinct yet interrelated discourses. These include:
 - ✓ multiculturalism leads to disunity;
 - ✓ Canadians accommodate cultural difference too much; and,
 - ✓ particular groups, namely Muslims (although often conflated with the term Arab), hold and promote values that are antithetical to 'Canadian values'.
- Editorial and letters that specifically discussed local multiculturalism, however, tended to present multiculturalism in Windsor in a positive light:
 - ✓ Cultural diversity was listed as a major reason to live in Windsor;
 - ✓ Windsor was presented as tolerant city;
 - ✓ The Carousal of Nations was used to illustrate the city's commitment to embracing cultural diversity;
 - ✓ Windsor was also referenced as historically multicultural, as a meeting place of French, British, and Native groups;
 - ✓ Only one letter openly discussed the potential conflict as a result of diversity.

Representations of Immigration and Refugees

- Dominant discourses in the Windsor Star painted immigrants and refugees in a negative light.
 - ✓ Refugees were primarily framed as criminals, queue-jumpers, fraudulent claimants, and ultimately, as economic burdens to legitimate tax-payers.
- However, being compassionate to immigrants and refugees was framed as a primary marker of Canadian identity.
- Canada's immigration system was portrayed as both too bureaucratic and too lenient.
- Distinctions between 'old' (those immigrating before the 1990s) and 'new' (those immigrating after the 1990s) immigrants emerged as salient categories in describing immigration to Windsor.
 - ✓ Old immigrants were framed as hard working and willing to integrate.
 - ✓ New immigrants, on the other hand, were pictured as lazy, economic drains, and abusive of Canada's generosity.
- Very few positive depictions of how immigrants and newcomers contribute to life in Windsor were present.

Concluding Themes

- Relationships with and evaluations of media are subjective, but there is a general acknowledgement that media is a powerful tool of representation with cited examples of misrepresentations of immigrants and visible minorities.
- Both positive portrayals and negative portrayals of immigrants, refugees, and cultural diversity were present in local media. However, negative portrayals of immigrants and refugees seem to outweigh positive portrayals.
- The lack of depictions of immigrants, particularly the more recent ones, in everyday life does not allow for a greater depth to the positive evaluations of immigrants.
- Media outlets are potentially open to engaging with immigrants and newcomers issues and this would require outreach and connection from media, newcomers, immigrants

Tension Points and Action Points

In the following section we highlight “tension points”, the gaps between stated goals, desires, or commitments and actual practices, possible avenues of action and practical examples of projects from other municipalities that have sought to address similar issues.

Note: many initiatives from other places highlighted below center on the participation of many sectors and often the leadership of municipalities

Tension Point #1: Mainstream actors are generally supportive of multiculturalism and immigration but demonstrate limited knowledge of the complex challenges newcomers face. Newcomers and immigrants continue to report experiences of discrimination despite claims of openness, tolerance, and acceptance.

Avenues for Action

- Deepen and strengthen positive attitudes through targeted initiatives that address systemic issues of racism, and the invisibility of immigrants and cultural diversity;
- Build greater knowledge and understanding of immigrants and newcomers and advance the contribution of immigrants to the cultural, social and economic fabric of Windsor Essex.
- Distinguish among different categories of immigrants and newcomers in how we ourselves as service providers and stakeholders talk about the relevant issues. Make a concerted point of seeing specificities among different groups (ethno-racial, gender, immigration categories, migration experiences, and contexts)
- Expand on existing initiatives to publically recognize the contributions of newcomers and immigrants to Windsor Essex.
- Encourage mainstream organizations to identify and launch specific outreach strategies to move beyond a client-based relationship with immigrants and newcomers, so their perceptions, experiences and resources inform specific initiatives.
- Develop an communication plan to foster relations with media and cultivate a more diverse depiction of the city and county

Practical Examples

- Anti-Rumour Campaign (Barcelona City Council) created an anti-rumour network of over 80 organizations, specially training ‘anti-rumour agents’, and created public service videos and a comic book series directed at intercepting stereotypes about immigrants and newcomers.
- “Racism Free Edmonton” (City of Edmonton) campaign opened up public dialogue for discussions about racism, discrimination, and inclusion in the city.
- Jean Foster Prize as Emerging Best Practice. Initiated by the City of Windsor and WELIP last year, this award recognizes individuals who exemplify the spirit of the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership through their efforts to foster a sense of belonging and welcoming among newcomers. Considering expanding on existing community awards, such as the YMCA Peace Awards or the Rotary Peace School Prize, to include recognition of immigrant and newcomer contributions.
- The Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County has an annual Harmony Award to honour a person who actively promoted the social equality of all cultures and the Champion Award that celebrates the contributions that immigrants make to our community.

Tension Point #2: There is a general support for inclusive community in principle, but very little in terms of responsibility or commitment to welcoming immigrants.

Avenues for Action

- In communities where there appears to be a strong sense of welcoming, municipalities play a key role in making this happen:
 - ✓ Explore different ways to enhance involvement in all municipalities in Windsor Essex
 - ✓ Develop strategic community-based social planning that includes immigrants in all fields of service delivery and institutional practices for all municipalities
 - ✓ Enhance and strengthen the City of Windsor Diversity Committee to include these features
 - ✓ Encourage the development of similar committees or welcoming strategies in Essex County municipalities
 - ✓ Develop a flexible and multi-pronged approach to integration that incorporates immigrant and newcomers issues into community based initiatives and mainstream service provision and mandates
 - ✓ Foster more interaction opportunities among newcomers and long-time residents
 - ✓ Foster deeper connections and values for welcoming capacity through community-wide and cross-sector initiatives (media, schools, mainstream services) led by municipal leaders and vehicles such as WELIP. Such an effort would promote the permanent residence of immigrants and reinforce their important contribution to the socio-economic development of Windsor Essex

Practical Examples

- Stuttgart Pact for Integration, (Stuttgart, Germany) created the “Office of Integration Policy.” This office has the official responsibility of coordinating cross-sector strategic action.
- Inter-culturality plan (Barcelona, Spain): inter-culturalism and attention to newcomer and migrant issues as part of city practices across all departments and agencies.
- Community Planning Strategy: Peel Region, places immigrant integration and settlement central to its overall development and planning strategies.
- For forty years the Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex County has hosted the Carousel of the Nations in Windsor to promote the acceptance of and appreciation for the co-existence of various cultures in the community.

- Welcoming Diverse Leadership (Richmond Hill, ON) program connected public institutions to visible minority and immigrant professionals. Also see Matchmaker, Matchmaker program (Amsterdam, Netherlands), a board matchmaking service that recruits and trains professionals of immigrant background to sit on civic boards.

Tension Point #3: Newcomers desire social engagement opportunities but report a general lack of opportunity to meet ‘Canadians’

Avenues for Action

- Enhance social networking opportunities through promoting better understanding of newcomers as citizens in all aspects of life in their city, town, and neighbourhood, and not just as needy newcomers.
- Create targeted initiatives where newcomers connect with ‘Canadians’ and/or long-time Windsor Essex residents
- Profile established immigrants to map out how they made connections in order to illustrate the opportunities and challenges they faced.

Practical Examples

- Social Connection Cafes: (or Immigrant Cafes – Guelph, ON) Multi-participant, Issue, Neighbourhood or Topical based forums which bring newcomers, immigrants, mainstream organizations and long term residents together.
- ‘International Garden Gottingen’ (Gottingen, Germany) uses community gardens to bring German and immigrant residents together for the purposes of building cross-cultural understanding and intercultural social connections.
- People in your Neighbourhood (Auckland New Zealand) project showcased the diversity of the city’s music scene by bringing together both long-term residents and immigrants to the area.
- Making Integration Work (Ghent Belgium) pairs newcomers with local coaches as a way of extending social connections and facilitating integration.

Tension Point #4: Public spaces are crucial to newcomers as sources of leisure and are important settings for cultural and inter-cultural recognition. However, many newcomers and immigrants expressed not feeling well represented in the cultural life of the region.

Avenues for Action

- More research needs to be done in mapping out public spaces and immigrant concentration, and exploring immigrant personal and geographical spaces in relation to the activities immigrants engage in.

- Engage immigrants in planning and decision-making process associated with public space, transportation, and leisure activities.
- Strategically use public art or public spaces to create city aesthetics that promote inclusion, inter-culturalism, cosmopolitanism, and diversity in a way that reflects the diverse populations of Windsor Essex.
- Provide greater financial support for low income residents (which include many newcomers) to access transportation to public spaces and community programs.

Practical Examples

- The City of New York is currently looking at how to use city parks as important sites for immigrant integration. The city is now implementing strategies to include immigrant input into the construction and use of public parks.
- The City of Madrid uses public spaces to encourage inter-cultural dialogue and community engagement. Outreach workers design and promote activities in public spaces that aim to promote neighbourly co-existence.
- Naan in the Park (Thornclyff Park Women's Committee, Toronto) supports and advances the use of public spaces through sporadic events that can include particular ethno-cultural celebrations, foods, and displays.
- Making Space for Sikh Parade (Badelona, Spain) is an example of how ethno-cultural events are incorporated into public space for particular celebrations.

Tension Point #5: Newcomers and immigrants express frustration with their portrayal in local media. On the other hand, media outlets are open to immigrant input but seem to lack the necessary connections and relationships with immigrant groups.

Avenues for Action

- Create and Promote a Campaign to highlight the social, economic and cultural benefits of immigrants to Windsor Essex
- Nurture the relationships between stakeholders, immigrants and media outlets to ensure that media outlets have more direct routes to immigrants and, thus, understanding of their issues and experiences. Address this disconnect by ensuring an ongoing, continuous relationships among concerned parties.
- Promote immigrant media talk-backs and letters to editors.
- Create a sector-wide committee to outreach and bridge gaps between media representation and immigrant communities, initiate stories, and respond to misrepresentations.

Practical example

- A media or diversity committee focusing on fostering relationships between immigrants and media outlets and to influence media representation to incorporate newcomer perspectives.
- Media workshops with targeted groups such as youth.
- MIRA (GTA): Part of a wider Communication Plan and informed by media advocacy approach where representatives are identified in a variety of sectors to respond to media representations, build outreach, foster ongoing dialogue to address negative media, and encourage more wide-ranging perspectives on immigrant issues.

Limitations and Further Studies

The parameters of this study was to explore the range and complexity of perceptions, opinions and experiences on particular issues regarding welcoming and allow us to consider areas for further research and community-based, targeted initiatives. This necessarily entails a wide array of information, and some of it may seem contradictory. This is because:

- Immigrants do not experience settlement in the same way and are themselves very diverse.
- Residents of Windsor Essex (of which mainstream organizations are largely comprised) have contradictory views about multiculturalism, diversity and immigration itself.

A multi-pronged approach to enhancing Windsor Essex’s ‘welcoming’ requires taking into consideration the multiple and complex experiences of newcomers and the contradictions between multiculturalism and immigration.

In-depth study of all service delivery organizations and across all sectors agencies was not possible. This report is also not an evaluation of settlement services and individual agencies. Furthermore, although certain patterns can be identified regarding the differing settlement experiences and challenges between the City and the County, **more research needs to be conducted on immigrant experiences in the county.** Such a study would include the experiences of migrant farm workers, who although are not immigrants or newcomers and largely excluded from settlement services, make important contributions to local life and whose treatment tests the parameters of the Windsor Essex’s welcoming capacity.

Rather, this report could be used to identify areas for further studies of the specific gaps we have identified in how immigrants are welcomed and act as a springboard for targeted initiatives and actions.

The research does reveal the problems associated with marginalizing immigrant integration to settlement sector and limiting our ‘integration’ efforts to the first few years of arrival. More research is necessary here to see how immigrants become fully integrated into the society. As well, sector-wide evaluations, assessments, or inventory of services and access need more study to explore the connections, coordination and planning of a welcoming community.

Final Conclusions and Overall Recommendations

To what extent is Windsor Essex welcoming to immigrants and newcomers?

Immigrant and newcomers have specific needs and experiences that are related to their relative different status as new residents to Windsor Essex and also due to their wide ranging skills, connections, and experiences that are both local and transnational. Moreover, many immigrants and newcomers share with other residents a sense of exclusion due to poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and lack of transportation. A range of factors, thus, combine to influence how newcomers and immigrants experience welcoming.

There are examples of sector specific sensitivity and awareness of immigrant and newcomer issues, and the settlement sector provides an important and valued contribution to meeting newcomer needs. Although some attempts are made, an integrated approach to welcoming immigrants and newcomers does not yet characterize Windsor Essex, especially from immigrant perspectives. Greater attention could focus on understanding how newcomers fare once they are no longer eligible for settlement services. Belonging is greatly enhanced by social inter-connections that provide residents with multiple avenues for participating in cultural, social and economic life in Windsor. Employment and related educational and training needs are crucial to enhancing belonging for immigrants and newcomers and cuts across all benchmarks.

A Welcoming Community is one that takes responsibility for and plans to build its welcoming community in ways that benefit all residents. The recommendations below are directed towards mainstream organizations, service providers, and long term residents.

Promote the creation and implementation of a community based strategy towards welcoming immigrants that:

- Reflects a commitment to advance welcoming
- Acknowledges and includes immigrant issues into all civic and public sector institutions and issues
- Is flexible, sensitive and appropriate to specific sectors
- Includes immigrant participation in the design and implementation of the strategy
- Is flexible to adapt to changing immigrant patterns
- Includes or supports a communications plan to foster relations with media, cultivate a more diverse depiction of the city and county
- Supports the work of the WELIP
- Encourages diverse stakeholders to recognize and acknowledge their own stake and leadership in welcoming immigrants and bringing together diverse stakeholders
- Promotes social networking and engagement opportunities that integrate newcomers and long term residents
- Provides opportunities for decision making and representation among newcomers and long term residents
- Encourage the city and municipalities to take a greater leadership role in advancing welcoming and belonging and the social planning it requires.

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