

NSIIP Community Service Provider Survey and Consultation

In November of 2014, nearly 80 service providers representing 35 North Shore agencies gathered to review and provide input to current immigrant integration barriers and issues and what needs to be done to make the North Shore a better place for newcomers.

Pre-Event Survey

In the weeks leading up to the event, participants were asked to complete a Pre-Consultation Survey examining the dimensions of a Welcoming and Inclusive community and provide their insights into the most important dimensions for the North Shore.

The survey was developed based on a large province wide survey conducted by the Immigrant Integration Branch of the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation from 2009 to 2011. The results of the province’s survey identified seven dimensions or elements that support immigrants and refugees to feel a sense of belonging to their community. This became known as the “Putting Down Roots Model”. The NSIIP Project Team used these seven dimensions to develop a survey which asked community service providers to offer their level of agreement with 21 statements. The Team added Settlement and Language Services.

Chart 1 below provides a summary of their agreement with these dimensions. Of note, only two dimensions made it past the 50% agreement and, most notably, less than 5% of these community experts agreed that employment equity has been suitably dealt with for newcomers. Also noteworthy, many respondent neither agreed nor disagreed with many of the statements. See Table 1 below.

Chart 1

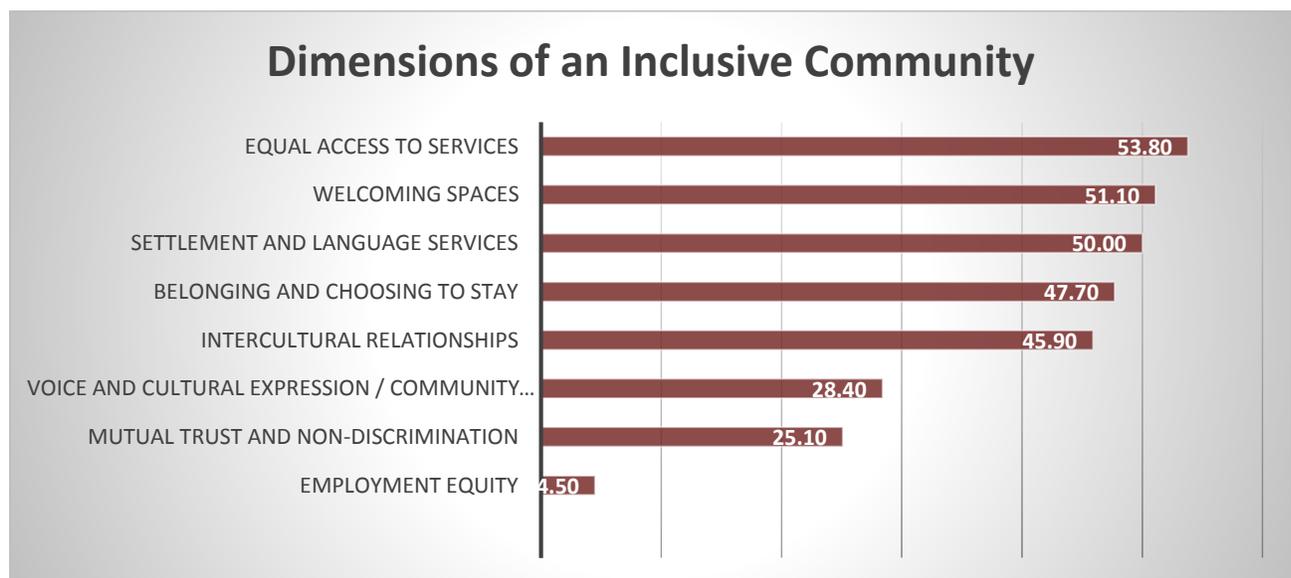


Table 1

Statement	% strongly agreed or agreed	%neither agree nor disagree
1. Employment Equity - 4.5%		
Newcomers are treated fairly when applying for new employment opportunities.	6.8%	40.9%
Newcomers are able to find employment opportunities that use their education, skills and abilities.	2.3%	25%
2. Mutual Trust and Non-Discrimination – 25.1%		
Newcomers trust people on the North Shore.	38.6%	50.0%
Longer term residents trust newcomers on the North Shore.	16.3%	60.5%
Discrimination is not a problem on the North Shore.	20.5%	22.7%
3. Voice and Cultural Expression / Community Representation – 28.4%		
Newcomers are comfortable expressing their cultures and traditions on the North Shore.	55.8%	30.2%
Newcomers see their ethnic or cultural groups represented in positions of influence on the North Shore - teachers, healthcare professional, police, or community leaders.	22.7%	34.6%
Newcomers' opinions about decisions affecting their community are respected by other people on the North Shore.	16.7%	57.1%
Newcomers see their ethnic or cultural group represented fairly in the local media.	18.6%	34.9%
4. Intercultural Relationships – 45.9%		
Newcomers feel comfortable working for someone with an ethnic background different from theirs.	38.6%	50.0%
Newcomers are able to effectively interact with people of ethnic backgrounds different from their own.	32.6%	41.9%
5. Belonging and Choosing to Stay – 47.7%		
Newcomers feel welcome and included on the North Shore.	50.0%	45.5%
Newcomers would rather stay on the North Shore than move elsewhere.	59.1%	36.4%
Newcomers feel a strong sense of belonging to North Shore.	34.1%	43.2%
6. Settlement and Language Services – 50%		
Newcomers have access to adequate settlement support.	52.3%	36.4%
Newcomers have adequate support to improve English language skills.	47.7%	22.7%
7. Welcoming Spaces – 51.5%		
Newcomers are comfortable using services or programs on the North Shore (e.g. libraries, community, seniors, youth or cultural centres, etc.)	52.3%	27.3%
Newcomers are comfortable visiting local businesses.	53.5%	41.9%
Newcomers attend community events	48.8%	34.9%
8. Equal Access to Services – 53.8%		
Newcomers have access to the same quality of healthcare services as everyone else on the North Shore.	68.2%	18.2%
Newcomers have access to the same educational opportunities as everyone else on the North Shore.	56.85%	20.5%
Newcomers have a good understanding of the community services available on the North Shore (e.g. libraries, community, seniors, youth or cultural centres, etc.)	36.4%	34.1%

Community Service Provider Consultation Summary

The findings from the Pre-Consultation Survey were used to guide small group discussions. Attendees were given the opportunity to focus on two of the dimensions they had the most expertise and interest in. In these small groups, participants were asked to identify the issues related to the dimension and then to brainstorm solutions.

The sharing at these small group discussions were captured by note takers. These notes have been summarized into the tables below. Identified issues and solutions are, by the nature of the event and the time available, short and in point form. But also, they are meant as a starting point for the NSIIP and its stakeholders in considering what to do next in establishing the strategic priorities for enhancing immigrant integration on the North Shore.

The tables below are listed by rank beginning with the dimensions receiving the lowest level of agreement and, therefore, requiring the greatest attention.

Employment Equity

Issues	Solutions
1. Language barriers	✓ Higher level of English for immigration application
2. Lack of cultural awareness and soft skills	✓ Workshops for immigrants ✓ Mentoring programs
3. Lack of a network	✓ Workshops for immigrants to understand the Canadian workplace, employment laws, etc. ✓ Employment services ✓ Networking opportunities / Mentoring
4. Lack of Canadian experiences	✓ Volunteer Opportunities
5. Lack of credential recognition	✓ Reduce costs of credential assessments
6. Mismatch; lack of information and understanding of labour markets in Canada	✓ Pre-arrival promotion and communication to help immigrants understand the Canadian workplace and community and have rational goals

Mutual Trust and Non-Discrimination

Issues	Solutions
1. Lack of mutual trust between different ethnic groups	✓ Public education and advocacy for both immigrants and long term residents at all ages
2. Stereotypes, biases and assumptions	✓ Interfaith dialogue and discussion ✓ Create opportunity for people to interact and get to know each other, i.e. buddy and host programs

Voice and Cultural Expression / Community Representation

Issues	Solutions
1. Lack of understanding of rights and responsibilities as a Canadian citizen / resident	✓ More advocacy and public education – raise awareness of freedom of speech
2. Changing demographics	✓
3. Language barriers	✓
4. Systemic barriers – leadership and visual barriers	✓ Empower

Intercultural Relationships

Issues	Solutions
1. Stereotype and prejudging	✓ Dialogue, training and education about multiculturalism
2. Lack of motivation, confidence and cultural capacity to connect with others	✓ Create opportunities and welcoming environment for immigrants to connect with community and others, i.e. multilingual staff, parenting groups ✓ Use social media to connect with newcomers

Belonging and Choosing to Stay

Issues	Solutions
1. Cultural difference	✓ Public education ✓ Create networking opportunities
2. Misconception of Canada; not realistic expectation	✓ Better communication and orientation of life in Canada ✓ Improve accessibility to resources and information
3. Language barriers	✓ More services for newcomers
4. High cost of living	✓ More services for newcomers ✓ Better employment services
5. Migration to Canada for some immigrants is not a permanent move	

Settlement and Language Services

Issues	Solutions
1. Lack of awareness and understanding of the services and programs	✓ Two steps to integration: 1) (services) in home language; 2) (services) in English
2. (More) English language programs needed	
3. Conflict between new settlement services and old services	

Welcoming Spaces

Issues	Solutions
1. Lack of awareness and understanding of the community services	✓ Better promotion and orientation of community services
2. Not sufficient willingness and capacity to participate in the services and communities	✓ Reach out to newcomers to the community ✓ Host / ambassador program
3. Not enough understanding of immigrants and their needs	✓ Develop community guide book ✓ Communication and dialogues
4. Culture difference	✓ Public education ✓ Stakeholder / service provider education
5. Geographic and technology issues hindering community engagement (high rises and more use of computer, less face to face)	
6. Lack of accessibility to services	✓ Multilingual services – e.g. library could have staff available to speak in different languages

Equal Access to Services

Issues	Solutions
1. Lack of understanding of community services on the NS	✓ Better promotion of services and programs
2. Not sufficient resources and services	✓ Partnerships / collaboration among agencies to increase accessibility to services ✓ More funding for programs and services ✓ Need to avoid being static in our service delivery ✓
3. Language barriers	✓ More funding and grants; more services, i.e. non-government agencies ✓ Reduce paperwork
4. Financial barriers faced by immigrants	✓ More funding for programs and services