



NEW START:
IMMIGRANT SERVING AGENCIES' PERSPECTIVE
ON THE ISSUES AND NEEDS OF
IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN
CANADA

Discussion Paper

Prepared by

Susan S. Chuang, University of Guelph

&

Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance /

Alliance Canadienne du Sector de l'Établissement des Immigrants

February 2009

NEW START: IMMIGRANT SERVING AGENCIES' PERSPECTIVE
ON THE ISSUES AND NEEDS OF
IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CANADA

Prepared by:

**Susan S. Chuang, Assistant Professor, University of Guelph &
Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (CISSA) / Alliance
Candienne du Sector de l'Établissement des Immigrants (ACSEI)**

CISSA/ACSEI is a national organization formed in March 2005 to represent the issues and expertise of the immigrant settlement sector to advance public policies and programs that enhance the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees to Canada. CISSA / ACSEI envisions a Canadian Society in which all immigrants and refugees are able to participate fully in society.

Susan S. Chuang is an Assistant Professor, Family Relations & Applied Nutrition at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	vi
Executive Summary	vii
1 Introduction	1
2 Methodology of Study	3
3 IRCY Challenges and Issues	4
4 “New” and Emerging Trends	17
5 Organizations’ Response	22
6 Organizations’ Challenges and Barriers	30
7 Ideal Programs	34
8 CIC Considerations	38
9 Closing Remarks	44
10 Tables 1-10	45
Appendix A: List of Participating Agencies	55
Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire	57

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism (CIC) for their collaborative effort in developing and implementing this research project. We are also grateful for their financial support.

This discussion paper would not be possible without the individuals who dedicated their time and effort toward this project. Their insights into the challenges and issues that immigrant and refugee children and youth (IRCY) face were invaluable. Special thanks to the project steering committee: Chris Friesen, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA), Bridget Foster, Atlantic Regional Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARISA), Jim Gurnett, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA), *Morteza Jafarpour, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), Darcy Dietrich, Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA), and **Stephan Reichold, Table de Concertation des Organismes au Service Des Personnes Refugees et Immigrantes (TCRI) for their guidance and input. We would also like to thank Jacqueline DeGuzman, Barbara Samarin, Michelle Gonsalves, and Anna Dawczyk for their time in transcribing the interview notes and coding the data.

Susan S. Chuang, Researcher
University of Guelph

Chris Friesen, Chair
CISSA/ACSEI IRCY Steering Committee

* Withdrew from the committee in July 2008 / ** August 2008

Executive Summary

It is estimated that approximately 60,000 immigrant and refugee children and youth under 18 years old settle in Canada annually. A higher proportion, over 40% or 4,000 refugee children and youth arrive as resettled refugees annually. While there are marked differences between immigrant and refugee children and youth (IRCY) many common needs and challenges emerge once in Canada. It is clear that immigrant and refugee children and youth experience their own unique adaptation and settlement experiences from their parents/guardians. Most convention refugee children and youth coming to Canada as part of the federal government national humanitarian program e.g. Resettlement Assistance Program are struggling to succeed. Over the past five years more refugee children and youth are arriving in Canada having been born and raised in refugee camps with limited access to any form of formal education. This is particularly difficult for refugee youth who arrive in Canada and are placed in age appropriate high school classes without the necessary support and culturally responsive assessment tools in place. Although newcomer children and youth are incredibly resilient with tremendous assets and coping / survival skills, once in Canada, they are not adequately supported. While immigrant and refugee children and youth are not usually apart of the decision to immigrant and/or flee their home country (in the case of refugees) once in Canada, most federally funded immigrant settlement programs and services target adults. There is growing consensus across Canada among service providers, school

boards and broad based youth mandated agencies that much more must be done to adequately support immigrant and refugee children and youth. Over the past 15 years in particular, immigrant serving agencies (ISA's) across Canada have responded. ISA's have put in place through often piecemeal, short-term project based funding and local fundraising activities a variety of innovative after school and summer social, academic and recreational interventions to help ease the transition of IRCY into Canada. These projects and programs are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

With funding provided by the Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CISSA/ACSEI launched this discussion paper to help inform ongoing program and policy dialogue to improve the settlement outcomes of IRCY in Canada. This discussion paper represents the first opportunity on a national basis to explore the unique needs of IRCY from the perspective of immigrant serving agencies. The discussion paper entitled "***New Start***" is divided into six main sections:

- Challenges and Issues facing IRCY;
- Emerging Trends among IRCY;
- Organization's Response;
- Organization's Challenges and Barriers;
- Ideal IRCY Programming; and,
- CIC Considerations.

Twenty-four (24) immigrant serving agencies and children/youth community based organizations from each region of Canada were asked to

comment on IRCY. Respondents represented front-line workers, Program Managers and Senior Management staff of agencies. Respondents provided invaluable insights into what they were observing in their local communities, new and emerging trends, how their organization was responding, and what an ideal IRCY program looks like. Lastly, respondents were asked for their input into areas that CIC should consider as part of national on-going program and policy deliberations. Funding did not permit consultation directly with IRCY. This is an acknowledged limitation of this paper.

A common national vision and framework within CIC for IRCY is critical in enhancing their settlement outcomes. While IRCY needs are not the sole responsibility of CIC, CIC should consider using currently available additional investment into immigrant settlement and language services to better support the adaptation and settlement needs of young people. While some investment is occurring in some regions of Canada it is important to ensure that national standards and comparable service are maintained.

NEW START: Immigrant Serving Agencies' Perspective
on the Issues and Needs of
Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Canada

Over the past several decades, the demographic population of Canada has greatly transformed, currently with the second highest immigrant population in the world. As the immigrant population increased in Canada, many not for profit immigrant serving agencies were established in response to the needs of newcomers as they settled and adjusted to their new lives in Canada. With the emergence of the Federal government's immigrant integration policy framework, three major national funding programs were introduced: 1) Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP); 2) Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC); and 3) Host Program. In 1998, the Resettlement Assistance Program, specifically for government assisted refugees, was introduced. However, the objectives of these programs have largely focused on adults, rather than children and youth. Until recently, provincial jurisdictions such as the Ministries of Education and local school boards were seen to have sole responsibility to provide supportive services for immigrant and refugee children and youth (IRCY).

Currently, close to 450 immigrant serving agencies (ISA's), largely community based not for profit organizations across Canada, have increasingly

stepped forward to provide targeted services and programs for IRCY. Over the past 15 years, the trend within ISA's from providing primarily adult oriented services to at risk IRCY populations has grown. This has especially been seen for refugee children and youth since the new Canadian Immigration Act that was passed in June 2002. Since ISA's are typically the first contact point to newcomers, it is important to gain greater insight into the challenges and issues they face in dealing with IRCY. From this vantage point, ISA's have a unique perspective to obtain first-hand accounts of IRCY's challenges and barriers as they settle into Canada. Thus, this discussion paper is largely based on ISA's perspectives, along with insight from some mainstream children and youth community-based organizations who are increasingly responding to the diverse needs of IRCY. We have defined IRCY as those individuals from 0 to 18 years of age. The main purpose of this discussion paper is to help inform on-going program and policy dialogue to improve the settlement outcomes of IRCY in Canada.

According to Statistics Canada, 91,641 (13,716 refugees) immigrant and refugee children and youth (IRCY) (up to age 24 years of age) migrated to Canada in 2001, making up 32.8% of the immigrant population (Statistics Canada, 2001). Five years later, 91,994 newcomers established their homes in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006). As newcomer children and youth lead the way for a "new" Canada, service providing organizations (SPO's), including immigrant serving agencies and community-based organizations, have increasingly responded to the unique needs of IRCY through various promising practices.

However, the role of ISA has not been systemically examined. This paper provides a starting point to gain a greater understanding of the challenges and barriers that new IRCY face (residing in Canada less than 5 years) from the perspectives of ISA's (under the auspices of CISSA/ACSEI). More specifically, the objectives of this paper are to examine: 1) IRCY current challenges and issues; 2) "new" or emerging trends that have arisen in the past five years; 3) various responses that organizations use to address these challenges and issues; 4) challenges and barriers that service providers face; 5) promising practices in programs and services; and 6) considerations for the Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism to enhance the settlement outcomes of IRCY.

Methodology of Study

A total of 40 individuals from 24 organizations from ten provinces participated in this study. Respondents ranged from front-line staff and Program Managers to senior management staff. Most participants were front-line staff. There were 18 immigrant serving agencies (ISA's) and 6 non-settlement, community-based organizations (CB's) that participated in this study. (e.g., Boys and Girls Club, YMCA). For ease of discussion, the responses will be aggregated by topics rather than by province or by type of sector (ISA, CB). However, for details, the responses have been placed in Table format by provinces and by type of sector, divided into 5 regions: 1) British Columbia; 2) Prairie Region (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba; 3) Ontario; 4) Quebec; and 5) Atlantic Canada Region (Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova

Scotia, and Prince Edward Island). There were almost an equal number of organizations from each region except for Quebec (one organization).

Interview. To obtain information about IRCY, an in-depth, semi-structured interview of 6 questions (see Appendix A) was developed in consultation with CIC to conduct telephone interviews which took approximately 1 to 1½ hours. These interviews took place between March and June 2008. Most interviews were conducted individually, with some organizations opting for a group interview. Notes were taken by hand and then typed and sent back to the interviewee to check for accuracy and additional comments. The first author conducted all of the interviews and then created a coding system for each question. Two students were trained to code the data. Since some organizations had several participants, the responses were combined to represent one organization (e.g., if two interviewees mentioned the same issue, the issue counted only once).

Coding systems. The coding systems for each question were very extensive and complex. The coding systems and definitions are in Tables 1 through 5. Initially, the responses from the organizations were compiled to examine the overall importance of each response (see Tables 6 to 11).

IRCY Challenges and Issues

As IRCY immigrate to Canada, they face many challenges in all aspects of their lives, including family, school, and community (see Table 6). Twelve themes emerged in this study. These themes or challenges are complex and difficult to decompartmentalize as they are multifaceted, integrating layers that directly and indirectly affect one's level of social adjustment and psychological well-being.

Additionally, there are issues that are age-dependent, relevant for children but not for youth and visa versa. However, as evident in our findings, the top three challenges (capturing two thirds of the responses) were similar for both age groups, and thus will be discussed first.

Challenge #1: General Language Issues

Not surprisingly, language was viewed as one of the top challenges that IRCY faced as they adjusted to Canada. Since language interfaces with many other challenges (such as learning, peer relationships), language was decompartmentalized into various domains. All service providers mentioned the difficulties IRCY faced in terms of language, but how language created obstacles for IRCY differed among service providers. For this category, general language issues particularly focused on general communication issues, how IRCY are assessed for language and other learning or physical disorders. Accordingly, general language issues were reported by 15 SPOs for children (10 ISA's, 5 CB's) and 11 for youth (11 ISA's, 1 CB's).

Both IR children and youth have significant challenges in verbally communicating to their peers, teachers, and other individuals. A lack of English proficiency creates confusion for IRCY in understanding their social world, especially when English speakers talk very quickly, making it more difficult for new learners to follow the conversations. Some children may “shut down” but then may be a target for a disability such as language delay or autism. In other situations, SPO's stressed the difficulties of properly assessing one's learning or physical disabilities since such disabilities may be disguised as only a “language

barrier” with the assumption that these children will eventually “catch up”. Such delays in proper assessments create greater challenges for teachers to ensure a successful academic path for IRCY. Moreover, some providers mentioned that increasingly more IRCY are from families of economic poverty or lower socioeconomic status and refugee camps where nutrition may have consequentially hindered healthy development. Thus, there is a greater need for proper assessments of IRCY as they enter preschool daycares and schools.

Challenge #2: Psycho-Social and Peer Relationship Issues

As alluded to earlier, another significant challenge that IRCY face is the psycho-social aspect of their lives which is related to language as well. Many respondents (10 ISA’s, 2 CB’s for children; 13 ISA’s, 3 CB’s for youth) stressed the importance of IRCY’s mental health and social relationships. With many IRCY having limited or no English language and their need to feel a sense of belongingness or “fitting in”, and their struggles in making friends, these challenges have become an emotional strain. As a result, many providers have seen IRCY experience low self-esteem, depression, stress, and being confused about their ethnic identity.

Moreover, many IRCY are facing peer pressure issues due to their inability or lack of confidence to communicate to their peers. Such struggles are especially seen in youth as they undergo adolescence while at the same time entering high school in Canada. As pointed out by SPO’s and supported by research, adolescence is a period of developmental and social transition where the importance of peers increases. Developmentally, youth face many challenges

during this time and for immigrants, they also have to simultaneously contend with cultural transitions and adjustments.

Challenge #3: School-Related Issues

As expected, a significant obstacle that respondents perceived for IRCY were issues related to school and academic performance. Specifically, the majority of the respondents viewed schooling as a challenge for children (11 ISA's, 3 CB's) and youth (10 ISA's, 2 CB's). There were three subdimensions that were stressed: 1) student-related (individual level); 2) parent-related (familial level); and 3) school culture.

Student-related issues. At the individual level, many SPO's discussed the issues of language as a significant barrier for newcomers to understand the school curriculum, customs, and regulations. Especially as prior school experiences may culturally differ, with refugees not having any school experience, the adjustment to the Canadian educational system may be more challenging for some IRCY. Thus, many providers emphasized that the school transition and orientation may need to be further explored in terms of providing a more effective way for IRCY to integrate into the classroom. Adding to the complexities of adjustment was when students' (e.g., refugees) school placements were based on their developmental age rather than their scholastic and/or cognitive abilities. These differences and the level to which IRCY were academically behind directly affected not only the students' academic performance, but their psychological well-being (e.g., self-esteem, anxiety) and social standing in the classroom

among their peers. Additionally, many families are struggling financially and thus, are not able to afford additional academic support for their children.

Parent-related issues. At the familial level, cultural and knowledge disconnects are also found among parents which impacts IRCY's academic performance and success. Focusing on homework, for example, respondents discussed how parents have a lack of involvement in their children's and youth's schooling. However, they interpreted parents' lack of involvement as not a lack of interest but rather, their limited abilities to assist their children, due to language barriers, lack of academic knowledge (i.e., having minimal or no education themselves), or lack of time. Furthermore, as providers have noticed, there has been an increased trend of IR families coming to Canada with significant economic difficulties and lower educational levels which has hindered parents in directly assisting their children and youth in their homework. Unfortunately, these IRCY then are placed at a disadvantage to their peers where other parents are actively involved and have the financial means to assist in their children's scholastic activities. Moreover, some ISA's have found that teachers may not realize the economic difficulties of IR families, thus, having limited time with their children's schooling. Rather, some teachers have perceived parents as "not caring" or not supportive of their children's academic achievement.

Other school-family disconnects have been demonstrated in IRCY families' understanding of the school culture. As one SPO illustrated, in some countries such as China, students are expected to be respectful of teachers, obedient, and quiet and thus, parents train their children accordingly. However,

Canadian teachers may expect their students to be vocal, ask questions, exposing students to different learning opportunities. Thus, some parents then train their children in not so optimal ways to be academically successful.

School culture. Another challenge that IRCY directly faces are the issues surrounding their knowledge about school customs, curriculum, and rules. Although a portion of immigrant children are from countries where school's culture, social norms and behaviors are similar (e.g., classroom environment, behaviour expectations such as raising your hand if you want to speak), others may have little or very divergent experiences. Such knowledge about cultural rules and regulations are necessary for IRCY to effectively adjust to their school life. For example, one service provider discussed how a child was ridiculed by her classmates because she would stand up, as per classroom etiquette in her home country, when the teacher entered the room. Several providers also mentioned the hardships faced by refugee children and youth (RCY). Since refugees are from camps where resources are scarce, they have learned to hoard resources and continued these survival behaviours in Canadian classrooms, not realizing that there are many supplies that are placed for common use and to be shared among all students. Unfortunately, some teachers have misinterpreted and misunderstood these acts as stealing. Such incidences impact RCY in multiple ways such as teachers' and peers' attitudes toward the individual to RCY's ability to integrate into the classroom, and the negative consequences and punishment for such behaviours. Especially when many of these incidences are compounded by the lack of English and/or French

proficiency of the student to express him/herself and to understand the situation, it creates a greater challenge for these students to overcome negative school experiences.

Challenge #4: Accessing Programs

In terms of children and youth accessing programs, 14 (10 ISA's, 4 CB's) and six (5 ISA's, 1 CB) SPO's viewed this as a challenge for newcomer families. Primarily due to the families' financial strains, IRCY were not able to access appropriate programs that would facilitate their social adjustment to Canada. For example, many SPO's discussed how daycares such as those connected to adult ESL/FSL language classes provide a rich environment for children to learn English and/or French, promote positive social interactions, and teach children about Canadian culture. Engaging in programs would also provide IRCY an avenue to build social support and feelings of belongingness. Giving IRCY opportunities to join programs also keeps youths off the streets and away from gang activities. Unfortunately, as many families face economic poverty, costs such as transportation, are unaffordable.

Challenge #5: Canadian Culture and Weather

For both children and youth, a significant portion of SPO's (10 and 6 ISA's, respectively) mentioned that IRCY in particular youth have significant difficulties in understanding and adjusting to Canadian culture (e.g., social norms, food) and weather (e.g., winter). It was believed that IRCY would benefit from a specific pre-departure orientation program that would highlight their unique adaptation and settlement needs. Some families were not prepared for the harshness of the

seasons such as winter and thus, did not have proper clothing. Also, some IRCY had adjustment issues in interacting with other ethnic minority groups. For example, some IRCY have difficulties in adjusting to mainstream Canada as they were unsure of what “being Canadian” meant.

Challenge #6: Negative Behaviours

Although more prominent among youth (7 ISA's, 2 CB's for youth vs. 3 ISA's organizations for children), SPO's viewed some of IRCY's behaviours as problematic with significant consequences for IRCY. Specifically, SPO's stated that some pre-adolescents and adolescents engage in negative behaviours such as physical aggression, bullying, and delinquency or gang-related behaviors. In terms of aggressive behaviours, service providers have consistently focused on refugee male youth. Many discussed that the motivations for such behaviour was two-fold: 1) previous experiences of living in high risk environments (refugee camps) where brutality and violence were common aspects of their lives; and 2) frustration, being unable to use other means such as verbal communication with their peers to express their feelings and thoughts. Many ISA's stated that these youth may have limited coping strategies and interpersonal skills to interact with others once in Canada. Some believe that youth who were aggressive may not realize that such behaviour is not condoned. Other providers linked aggression to language development to the extent that some IRCY may become frustrated and without the ability to verbally communicate their thoughts, use aggression to express themselves.

Negative behaviours have also been linked to refugee youth who had past experiences of living with very limited resources. Thus, some youth may not understand social customs and behaviours and thus, their overt behaviors become misinterpreted. For example, one provider stated that a refugee boy wanted to share his food with his peer, and assumed that his peer would be willing to share food. Thus, the refugee boy then took his peer's food without asking (as customary in his past experiences). In this scenario, the teacher misinterpreted his action as "stealing" and reprimanded him accordingly, creating a situation where other students then viewed the refugee boy's behaviour as negative.

More serious negative behaviours are delinquency and gang-related activities. As immigrants and refugee youth adjust to their new lives, some are hindered by language and finances. As IRCY struggle to learn a new language and may not fare well academically, their disgruntled attitudes toward school become a "hunting ground" for gangs. Preying on vulnerable IRCY, gangs entice IRCY by providing a "sense of belongingness" within their gang membership, and with luxuries of cell phones, other "important" materials, and money in exchange for IRCY to engage in illegal behaviours such as being a "drug runner". Moreover, many IR families are living in poverty and youth then take on some of the financial responsibilities of the family household. With limited English and work skills, money from gangs become increasingly enticing.

Challenge# 7: Parent-Child Relationships

As families immigrate to a new country, families may encounter cultural clashes that affect parenting and parent-child/adolescent relationships (8 ISA's for youth, 2 CB's youth, 3 ISA's for children). One primary concern is the level of autonomy that children and especially youth desire from their parents, although parents do not grant such degrees of personal freedom. Such conflicts have been attributed to the "Canadian culture" where individuality and independence is encouraged in children and youth. However, many immigrant families are from more "collectivistic" cultures which emphasize interpersonal relationships. It is believed that some parents are attempting to protect and maintain their children's cultural identity and their peers may threaten that development. For example, for religious reasons, some families do not encourage social interactions between genders which create difficulties for some youth to "fit in". Many activities such as school events are inter-mixed and thus, new immigrants may be left out. As the providers mentioned, some newcomer parents viewed Canadian-born children and youth as having too much personal freedom.

Moreover, parents and children acculturate at different rates which increases potential conflicts. Along with the differing acculturation rates, some stated that children and youth were becoming more "advanced" in understanding the Canadian culture since the younger generation's English and/or French proficiency were more advanced. Due to language issues, some children and youth became language brokers for their parents, creating a role reversal where parents became dependent on their children, such as assisting them in paying

the bills, going to the doctors, and dealing with other adult situations. Parents' dependencies on their children then become problematic as newcomer parents re-define or hold on to their parental status in the family.

Also, some providers mentioned that since many families are poor, some youth are given financial support from the government and/or work part-time. Some youth also take on some adult household responsibilities such as cooking for the family and taking care of their younger siblings. Such roles elevate their social status within the family and thus may alter and challenge some of the power dynamics within the household.

Challenge #8: Financial Issues

As increasingly more immigrant families live on or below the poverty line, providers are witnessing the financial difficulties among IR families in various ways, with some nuances by age, including: 1) meeting basic needs; 2) sharing financial responsibilities; 3) providing material gains for children and youth to “fit in” with peers; and 4) future careers/employment (8 ISA's, 2 CB's for children; 9 ISA's for youth).

Meeting basic needs. Primarily for IR children, SPO respondents have witnessed how the families' limited financial means have directly affected parents' abilities to provide basic needs to their children such as nutritious diets. Some commented that parents are working more than one job and longer hours which, in turn, sacrifices the levels of parental involvement.

For youth, the financial issues were more complex including: 1) providing material gains to socially fit in; 2) sharing the household financial burdens; and 3) employment opportunities.

Socially fitting in with material gains. More salient among immigrant youth, service providers commented on how new immigrant youth were challenged with their families' financial situation and their psychological well-being (six SPO's). Specifically, youths were equating the lack of material gains such as running shoes, cell phones, and other technologies, to their sense of belongingness among their peers. Some have even resorted to delinquency and engaging in gang behaviours to be able to afford or to be given these material products. Stresses of "having what others have" have also been seen to affect parent-adolescent relationships where adolescents may not understand the financial strains of requesting such materials from their parents. Although financially constrained, some providers discussed how some parents did not understand how these materials represent social status among IRCY.

Sharing financial responsibilities. Specifically for youth, four SPO's discussed how some youths were sharing the financial burdens of the family. Such financial pressures on youth have come at a cost to their education, whether balancing between schooling and work or some youths even resorting to dropping out of school. Others have engaged in illegal activities (being a drug runner) to make money faster.

Employment opportunities. Lastly, some respondents discussed the stresses of employment for IR youth. Especially for older youth, attaining

employment is difficult. While youth may want to work to earn money, their understanding of how to seek employment is limited, and their English/French speaking skills may hinder them as well.

Challenge #9: Mental Health

Nine providers (3 CB's) placed special focus on refugee children and youth and their past experiences in refugee camps. Many refugees have witnessed violent crimes (e.g., family members being killed in front of them) which have traumatized these children and youth. With limited resources and infrastructure, some children and youth have difficulties in adapting and acculturating into their new life. Some suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder which remains undiagnosed and untreated. Unfortunately, these challenges then impact their lives in various ways such as their abilities to concentrate in school (leading to lower academic achievement) to socially interacting with their peers (leading to higher levels of loneliness, sense of belongingness, anxiety, depression etc.). As discussed previously, some refugee children and youth had resorted to aggressive behaviours toward peers as well as teachers.

Challenge #10: Parent-Child Separation

Primarily for newcomer children, SPO's (4 ISA's, 1 CB for children; 2 ISA's for youth) found that some children struggled with separation anxiety from their parents in day care/school. Such separation anxiety has created difficulties for children, as well as parents, to adjust to their new lives.

Challenge #11: Parental Discipline

Disciplinary issues have also been mentioned, especially in terms of physical punishment. Since in some cultures where parents were able to use corporal punishment with their children and youth, they may not initially realize that abuse is legally not acceptable in Canada. As children and youth socialize with their peers, they quickly learn that such behaviours are illegal and that children and youth have individual rights. Thus, some parents feel that they are unable to “control and discipline” their children and youth (4 ISA’s, 1 CB for children; 2 ISA’s for youth).

Challenge #12: Racism and Discrimination

Seven SPO providers (2 CB’s) mentioned that racism and discrimination from their peers and teachers were significant challenges for IRCY. IRCY described to providers a variety of incidences of why they were discriminated against, including reasons of language barriers, clothing, colour of their skin, the food they ate, etc. Such discriminations have taken many forms such as exclusion from groups, lack of friendships, teasing, and bullying. An expected consequence is that many IRCY felt alienated, depressed, and isolated.

“New” and Emerging Trends

The introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act has impacted the characteristics of the IRCY population (particularly refugee children and youth) while the lack of specific programming and funding to address the unique needs of IRCY has compounded issues observed two decades ago. This, in turn, has created new and emerging challenges both for IRCY themselves and

immigrant serving agencies and non settlement community based organizations (see Table 7). Three primary themes emerged:

Emerging Trend #1: Program Availability

The greatest challenge that SPO's (both ISA and CB) commented was the lack of specific programs that target IRCY during their adjustment and settlement process. Many (11 ISA's, 4 CB's) stated that the number and needs of families that they serve has increased significantly (e.g., increased number of refugees having complex needs). For instance, ISA's have observed that many refugee children and youth may suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD). Current research indicates that up to 90% of all refugee children and youth would benefit from specialized trauma support interventions but most ISA's do not have trauma and counseling support programs to deal with such complex issues. Furthermore, the community at large except in very isolated cases in some large cities have specialized interventions for these children and youth. This imbalance of correspondence between number of clientele to targeted IRCY programs has created great strains on both IRCY and service providers. With very limited program funds that specifically target IRCY, many needs of IRCY and their families are not adequately met. At the same time, organizations that do offer limited specific IRCY programming must contend with on going sustainability challenges.

Some SPO's commented on the location of their organization in relation to IRCY settlement patterns. Specifically, some ISA's and community based organizations mentioned that they were located in the city where housing is no

longer affordable / available to many IRCY families (ie, families move to less expensive suburbs). Compounding the site location issue is the fact that many IRCY do not have the financial means to travel where services are located. Some SPO's have responded by deploying staff as part of a mobile response unit.

Emerging Trend #2: Higher Individual Needs

Ten ISA's, but not CB, focused on the changing characteristics of the recent IRCY population. For instance, ISA's have noticed that IRCY are immigrating to Canada with higher individual needs such as physical, developmental, and cognitive challenges, or serious health issues, specifically refugee families. The task of properly assessing IRCY for potential disabilities or challenges is compounded when children have little or no proficiency in English or French and the assessment tools are not culturally responsive. Moreover respondents commented that agencies, including health care professionals and Boards of Education, have limited or in most cases no staff who have specialized training in this area.

Emerging Trend #3: Life and Social Skills

The third emerging trend that was stated by nine SPO's (5 ISA's, 4 CB's) was the concerns about the families' lack of life and social skills. As mentioned earlier, increasingly more families are coming to Canada with very limited financial resources, especially refugee families. In terms of social skills, providers are seeing that some children and youth have greater difficulties in socially interacting with their peers and teachers. Some may not understand the cultural norms and acceptable social behaviours, whether in the classroom or in their

social environment. For example, children who have used physical aggression in their native countries may carry over such behaviors, not realizing that aggressive behaviours are not condoned in Canada.

For life skills, providers have discussed that, unlike in previous years, families are coming in with limited life skills, which is not surprising as many newcomers are from economically impoverished countries. With lower life skills, ISA providers are seeing how families are struggling more and being less resilient to their social and physical environments. Their difficulties to cope with their new environment negatively impact how their children will cope with their surroundings as well. Families are then relying more on ISA's to assist them in gaining information and effective skills to improve their lives in Canada.

Other Emerging Trends

Parenting challenges, limitations of families' socioeconomic statuses, school-related issues, IRCY's anti-social behaviours, and discrimination/racism barriers were other trends stated by respondents.

Parenting issues. Focusing on parents, five organizations (2 CB's) found that they were dealing with more parenting challenges and problems. Related to families' socio-economic status, ISA's were finding that parents were less capable of (but not less willing) to assist with their children' academic activities (e.g., homework). Especially with the increased number of special need refugees, many parents have little or no education or literacy, as discussed earlier. Thus, the IRCY's adjustment to school is less likely to be supported by their parents who are not familiar with or aware of the school system, culture, or practices.

Moreover, parental involvement in their children's academic life is limited since teachers tend to primarily use written communication when attempting to contact parents. Such educational barriers for parents have placed their children at a significant disadvantage as compared to their peers with parents who may be more educated and/or involved.

ISA providers have also linked lower (or no) education to the families' limited economic resources. Limited financial resources have created additional challenges for children and youth on several fronts. First, cost of housing has increased and thus, many families have struggled to maintain their housing with some needing to move further away from the city to less expensive and more dangerous neighbourhoods. Such geographic location has created a challenge for children and youth to seek out and participate in programs and services. Second, and as mentioned earlier, some youths focus on needing and wanting materials or money to fit in with their peers (e.g., cell phones, going to the movies) but these material gains are not affordable for parents. Such financial strains have increased conflicts among parents and children/youth, with some IRCY finding other avenues for financial support which may be unsafe (e.g., drug runners).

School-related issues (e.g. academic performance) were mentioned by 4 ISA's, specifically that IRCY are having less academic success leading to increased high school drop-out rates. As mentioned earlier, youths' prior academic experiences (or the lack thereof), parents' inability to assist in

homework, and youth who may be working to help support the family are contributors to their academic struggles.

As discussed earlier, with the greater influx of special need refugee families, four SPO's (1 CB) have observed increased negative behaviors among IRCY such as aggression, bullying, and gang-related behaviors. This is not surprising since children and youth continue to use their survival behaviours as they adjust to a new country. With little infrastructure to provide, in particular refugees with specific trauma support programs, many children's and youth's continued negative behaviours will have significant ramifications in various aspects of their development (psychological, social, academic etc.).

Lastly, some SPO's believed that an increasing challenge for IRCY was the impact of discrimination and racism (2 ISA's, 2 CB's), and families becoming more disconnected (socially isolated) from their community (2 ISA's, 1 CB).

Organizations' Response in Addressing IRCY Needs

Within the constraints of mostly short-term / piecemeal one year project based funding ISA's and non-settlement CB organizations have employed numerous strategies to respond to IRCY needs. There is tremendous innovation and consistency across Canada to better support IRCY. As seen in Table 8, various formal and informal strategies have been created, primarily focusing on: 1) workshops and individual meetings; 2) supporting IRCY and families in a variety of ways; 3) the types of programs they offered; 4) school orientations; 5) mentorship programs, 6) cultural promotion, and 7) school activities. Other

strategies which varied by organization used to support the adaptive process for IRCY will also be discussed.

Strategy #1: Workshops and Individual Meetings

Almost all of the SPO's (17 ISA's, 3 CB's) stated that they created various workshops and held individual meetings with both IRCY and their families in dealing with their settlement and adjustment challenges and issues. The workshops and meetings were based on a wide variety of topics. For example, ISA's staff recognized that some parents had parenting challenges and thus, created forums/peer support group to educate parents on parenting within a Canadian context. Other topics included nutritional facts, personal hygiene, or community activities that were free for families. Most organizations believed that IRCY cannot be viewed as individuals but rather, within a family system where services and programs must be offered to all other family members to ease the cultural adjustment for IRCY. However, it was also recognized that IRCY experience their own unique adaptation and settlement challenges. A combination of targeted workshops for IRCY and the family as a whole was seen to be important.

Strategy #2: Various Forms of Support

Another common strategy that was used by many of the organizations (14 ISA's, 3 CB's) was providing support for IRCY and families. Of the various types of support, organizations primarily focused on instrumental and emotional/social support.

Instrumental support. As many recently arrived immigrant families live in poverty and settle in Canada with little financial resources and limited understanding of the Canadian customs and practices, many service providers offered their support accordingly. First, some organizations recognized that some families have financial needs such as food, clothing, furniture, transportation, and thus, support was given accordingly. Some organizations raised funds to purchase furniture for families, for example. Other avenues to assist families' financial needs were met through fund raising or donating funds so that IRCY could engage in extracurricular activities such as camps, swimming lessons, cultural, sporting events and other extra-curricular activities.

Another instrumental support raised by respondents included interpretation and translation services for IRCY and their families. Some service providers provide escort accompaniment to schools with parents and students to discuss the challenges that the child may be facing and assisted in creating effective solutions. Other times, service providers were advocates for families to navigate through programs such as food banks, or filling out employment application forms. Also, some organizations assisted IRCY with referrals and/or service linking to other organizations, ensuring that IRCY are maximizing their opportunities to get the necessary services at various agencies.

Emotional and social support. Just as important, SPO's mentioned how they provided emotional and social support for IRCY and their families. Re-building a social support network in a new country can be extremely challenging and emotionally stressful for many families. Becoming the "point person" for

parents and creating support groups alleviated some family stress which allowed parents to concentrate on other important matters such as spending more time with their children and being more emotionally available to them.

Strategy #3: Non-Academic Programs

Many of the participating organizations (13 ISA's, 3 CB's) greatly valued their non-academic IRCY programs. As already noted, these programs tended to be funded piece-meal through various sources and fundraising activities. The purpose was to provide avenues for IRCY to engage in social activities where IRCY were able to rely on their strengths that are not contingent upon their levels of English or French language proficiency or academic abilities. Some programs focused on targeted programs to include only new IRCY in attempts to build relationships and social support among newcomers, creating a sense of belongingness to not only the organization but more broadly, to Canada. Others have developed activities and programs that integrated various individuals (ethnicities, immigrant and non-immigrant) to provide opportunities for IRCY to socially interact and build friendships with Canadian born, English speaking children and youth such as youth buddy programs. For IR children, some SPO's focused on their structured day care program associated with Language Instruction to Canada (LINC) programs.

Strategies # 4 and #5: Schooling and School Orientation

Since schooling is central to IRCY lives, it was not surprising that the majority of the organizations' strategy efforts were focused around academics (9 ISA's, 2 CB's). It is important to stress that organizations have systematically

created two types of strategies to enhance IRCY's academic performance in direct and indirect (through parents) ways.

School orientation. As many new families may not be familiar with the school system, institutional customs, practices, and regulations, 16 SPO organizations provided school orientations for IRCY and parents such as through the Settlement in Workers (SWIS) program. Specifically, many of the respondents focused on orienting parents from discussing issues about how parents can help their children be ready for school to their expected parental roles and levels of involvement in their children's academic lives. Parents were also informed about their rights as parents and provided them with strategies of how to approach teachers should issues arise. One example included an ISA partnership with a school to jointly organize interpreter supported parent forums.

Schooling. As expected among IRCY, many new immigrants benefit from tutoring and academic activities that would promote their learning of the curriculum as well as the English / French language. Some organizations created peer-tutors where native Canadians volunteered to assist newcomers. Such programs also promoted peer relationships and created forums for new immigrants to build repertoire with Canadian born, English /French speaking peers. Canadian children and youth also benefited in the relationship in that they gained greater understanding of the immigrants' culture, customs, and practices. Other organizations created forums where IRCY learnt the intended subject (e.g., French) within social activities.

Strategy #6: Mentorship Programs

Almost all of the organizations (11 ISA's, 3 CB's) recognized the importance of providing some level of mentorship program or peer support for new immigrant children and youth, with the focus on youth as the mentors and not adults. The goals of the mentorship programs varied by how the organization interpreted the local needs of IRCY. Some organizations created "buddy" systems, e.g., youth buddy/host programs, so that the peer would serve as a social support for the new immigrants. The peers' ethnic background may vary where some organizations purposefully matched new immigrants with a native peer whereas other organizations matched IRCY with older immigrants who have undergone similar acculturation stresses and challenges. Others programs involved mentors who were successful immigrants who may have graduated from high school or university.

These mentorship programs also were organized in various places with some developed through community and ISA's while others were developed in schools such as during lunch hours. School mentorships were generally for the first two weeks of school to help newcomers familiarize themselves with the educational environment. These mentorship programs were very effective as new immigrants navigated through their new lives, encountering various challenges such as peer relationships and bullying, discrimination, and feelings of belongingness and "fitting in".

Strategy #7: Cross-Cultural Promotion

In supporting multiculturalism in Canada, 12 (8 ISA's) organizations emphasized the importance of promoting all cultures, not just the "Canadian way". Many have created cultural awareness programs and activities for immigrant families which included various native cultures and the Canadian culture, integrating various languages and cultural customs. Performances, celebration of cultural holidays and events, sharing of cultural foods were some techniques that are used to not only inform parents about Canadian ways of life but also created a climate of inclusion of all cultures. Realizing that many IRCY struggle with their ethnic identities and parents' fears of their children "losing their heritage", service providers have actively advocated the importance of maintaining both cultures.

Other Strategies

Four other strategies emerged in this study that can be found among various organizations, including: 1) community building; 2) teaching and promoting empowerment to IRCY and families; 3) building positive relationships with IRCY and their families; and 4) creating a safe and welcoming environment for IRCY (e.g., One ISA in Ontario recently opened a specific IRCY drop-in centre where services and programs in several different languages are offered).

Community building. Some organizations (7 ISA's, 1 CB) focused on building partnerships and collaborations with local specialized organizations which, in turn, assisted IRCY to receive the necessary services and programs. Some partnerships were based on the framework that these organizational relationships would ensure that effective communication would flow in all

directions among schools, ISA's, and families. Many organizations discussed how they were advocates for IRCY and assisted IRCY through the school transition, negotiating and speaking on the IRCY's behalf. Also, service providers were language brokers for parents to the extent of working with schools to help resolve problems with the teachers.

With limited human and financial resources, many organizations also discussed how their collaborative ties with other organizations provided increased programs and services for IRCY and their families. Capitalizing on each others' strengths, organizations found effective ways of offering other services and programs for IRCY and their families. For example, some partnerships exposed IRCY to the various programs and activities that are offered throughout their community. Other partnerships provided the infrastructure for IRCY to build future relationships such as organizations working with schools and local employers to recruit IRCY for employment. Some partnerships have assisted organizations by providing many necessary resources for IRCY such as health care and first aid training.

Empowerment. Other strategies that some service providers (7 ISA's) expressed were empowering IRCY and parents so that they could advocate for themselves in various situations. For example, one organization illustrated how a Youth Advisory Board was created in the organization so that IRCY would be able to express their viewpoints in terms of how and what programs would be offered to them. Also, with all the complexities of the challenges and issues that immigrant families face, families need to feel empowered to control their situation

and to be active in finding the solutions that are meaningful and culturally relevant to their specific needs.

Positive relationships. To effectively reach IRCY, five organizations (2 CB's) believed that they needed to build positive and supportive relationships with the families, and not just with IRCY. Gaining trust from families provided a context and opportunity for service providers to better understand the challenges and barriers that IRCY faced during the settlement process. Some believe that building relationships with parents creates a level of trust among parents so that parents are reassured that providers are working with and not against parents.

Safe environment. Lastly, two (1 ISA) organizations also mentioned that it was important for them to build a safe haven for IRCY. As IRCY encounter many challenges and barriers throughout their settlement process, some organizations viewed their organization as a “second home”, a place where IRCY would not be judged, and a place where they can seek comfort and guidance. Moreover, creating a place for IRCY to go to provided better avenues for IRCY to spend their time and to build their social networks.

Organizations’ Challenges and Barriers in Serving IRCY

While organizations have been able to devise effective strategies to assist IRCY to better adjust to a new country, organizations continue to face many challenges and barriers. The demographics of IRCY varied across Canada and thus, the organizational challenges were not as consistent. While all organizations faced financial issues related to specialized IRCY programming, organizations were asked to discuss other barriers. The biggest challenge was

on program sustainability, with some focus on: 1) the lack of qualified staff to provide the services and programs; 2) the lack of informed local communities about the immigrant population and the challenges and barriers they faced; 3) the lack of willingness of local communities to collaborate; and 4) the lack of information/training among other stakeholders (see Table 9).

Structure and Sustainability of Programs

While all organizations face funding issues targeting IRCY, 10 SPO's (1 CB) discussed the structure and sustainability of their current programs. More specifically, some SPO's focused on the challenges of the funding structure for programs. For example, there were challenges in creating programs that were IRCY-focused versus funding-focused (creating programs to meet the funding criteria). To illustrate this dilemma, some agencies mentioned that many of their funding guidelines are geared for IRCY. However, there are many benefits to include mainstream, native Canadians in the program but currently, the funding cannot sustain increased enrollments/participants.

Others focused on the challenges of having to sustain long term programs with limited funds while many grants may only support new, short-term projects and pilot projects. Since funding is not guaranteed every year, and tends to be project based, a great deal of time and resources are allocated to seeking and writing grant applications and proposals.

Lack of Qualified Staff

The second greatest challenge that SPO's faced (9 ISA's, 2 CB's) was the availability of qualified staff that can effectively deliver culturally responsive and

relevant programs and services to and for IRCY. Due to the specialized and complex needs of IRCY (e.g., learning a new language and the level of ESL training that providers have, counseling traumatized/victimized IRCYs), some organizations are strained or unprepared to deal with the multitude of IRCY needs. This is especially true in smaller centres where first language staff resources are less prevalent.

Moreover, respondents stated that many service providers in their local community lack the expertise (cultural competency) and training opportunities to respond to the needs of a diverse population. For example, one respondent in Atlantic Canada stated that although refugees were settling in their province, local service providers had no training, information or any personal experiences (all were Canadian born, English speakers) about how to best serve this newcomer population.

Lack of Informed Communities

As many organizations (8 ISA's, 1 CB) pointed out, some of the difficulties in delivering effective programs and services and partnering with other agencies stemmed from the local communities' lack of knowledge and understanding about the unique needs of IRCY. Minimizing and marginalizing the efforts of immigrant serving agencies then created difficulties for these organizations to seek community partnerships. For example, several providers have discussed the difficulties of advocating for refugee children who engage in "survival behaviours" such as hoarding in the classroom and trying to impress upon the teachers that these children are not delinquent. Unfortunately, teachers who are

untrained in working with traumatized refugee students have caused some detrimental experiences for these children who according to one respondent, in one case, never returned back to school.

Lack of Collaboration Among Various Organizations

As nine organizations (7 ISA's) stated, many agencies do not have qualified staff to address all of the IRCY's and families' needs, many strive to create partnerships with experts in local organizations to assist them in serving IRCY. However, many have faced difficulties in solidifying these partnerships, which, as discussed above, is partly due to the lack of informed community stakeholders. As some respondents have stated, the challenges of IRCY cannot be solved by one agency alone – there needs to be a collaborative effort among various community stakeholders such as the school, parents, libraries, health centres, mainstream community organizations, etc. Likewise, another respondent pointed out that a good intervention program meant good support from all community members and thus, community organizations needed to support each other. Unfortunately, some SPO's faced great difficulties in building effective networks among various organizations to create a smooth and seamless transition for IRCY to move from one organization to another. With the recent CIC funding increases for immigrant settlement and language services, there is some confusion and concern about how best to coordinate services at a local level.

Information and Training

Some organizations (6 ISA's, 3 CB's) also stressed that they would benefit from more pre-arrival information about IRCY populations such as information on specific source countries and insights into previous schooling system and curriculum, etc. Although many providers talked about how they actively ask IRCY and families about their heritage, it would be useful to systematically create and compile the information. Other types of resources that were desired focused on curriculum or activities where compilation of these programs or even curriculum ideas would be highly valued.

Other Organizational Challenges

There were other challenges that were of concern to some organizations which hindered their abilities to effectively serve IRCY and their families. First, nine SPO's (2CB) perceived their local communities as lacking support for their efforts in serving IRCY population. Some respondents commented that their communities did not value their work but rather, diminished their positions to "babysitters". The lack of support has created an unwelcoming relationship among some local communities and thus, creating additional barriers for IRCY and their families. Other concerns that were raised focused around language barriers and culturally responsive screening tools for various disabilities (e.g., deafness, learning, developmental delays) (5 ISA's, 1 CB).

Ideal Programs for IRCY

Currently numerous innovative programs are being offered to IRCY across Canada that could be considered promising practices and while programs and services may differ from each other, there are common underlying goals and objectives. When organizations were asked to provide general themes of what programs would be ideal for IRCY, three themes were most prominent: 1) non-academic; 2) academic; and 3) mainstream-centered programs (see Table 10).

Recreational/Social Programs and Building Social Relationships

Generally, many of the SPO's viewed non-academically-based programs and activities as ideal programs for both newcomer children (11 ISA's, 3 CB's) and youth (15 ISA's, 2 CB's). Especially as IRCY face various academic and language challenges, many ISA providers believe that they should provide after-school and summer social and recreational opportunities for IRCY to develop and strengthen their social skills to build peer relationships among immigrant and Canadian born residents. Another non-academic program goal is for IRCY to be able to engage in activities that highlight their strengths, rather than their deficits such as limited English or French proficiency, or relying on academic or cultural knowledge. Placing all children and youth, regardless of nativity, on equal footing allows IRCY to build their levels of confidence, self-esteem, and strengthen their resiliency to overcome their settlement related barriers and challenges.

Other benefits of social and recreational activities include promoting exercise and physical activities, and to highlight the importance of health and nutrition. As some providers have discussed, adjusting to new Canadian foods

and the nutritional benefits, or the lack thereof, may not be well understood among parents and children, especially those with limited financial resources.

Psycho-social issues. Through these social activities, nine SPO's also viewed such activities as excellent social and behavioural training grounds for IRCY to learn what is socially appropriate and how to interact with others. IRCY would have multiple opportunities to build a rapport and common ground with other immigrant and mainstream children, hopefully leading to social networking and friendships. As IRCY are able to create social networks and friends, they become less vulnerable to maladaptive behaviours and mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, low self-esteem, depression).

Academic Programs

It is not surprising that many organizations (11 ISA's, 2 CB's for children; 11 ISA's, 1 CB for youth) viewed various forms of academic support, including orientation programs about the school system, customs, and practices, tutoring by subject matter, providing opportunities to practice speaking English/French, as ideal programs for IRCY. However, some organizations valued non-academic programs more than academic programs while others viewed academic programs as intertwined with a social agenda of building relationships with the tutors who tend to be peer volunteers.

Mainstream-Centered Programs

Developing specialized interventions for IRCY during their settlement process needs various approaches that are as diverse as the children and youth themselves (6 ISA's, 2 CB's for children; 9 ISA's, 2 CB's for youth). It is clear that

there is no one way to support IRCY during their adaptation and settlement process. The types and range of programs to support IRCY need a combination of expertise and resources. Although some programs were seen as ideal to be placed within ISA's where new IRCY can develop a sense of belongingness and create their social networks in a safe and nurturing environment as part of ISA's specific mandate, other programs should be placed in mainstream organizations. How and when this occurs depend on many different factors. Almost half of the organizations endorsed the notion that intentionally segregating IRCY beyond an initial settlement orientation time frame from the mainstream population can create difficulties for IRCY to adjust into Canada. Thus, some organizations argued for programs that should integrate IRCY with mainstream peers and to venture out into the community and participate in local activities. Regardless of location, the general objective of these ideal programs would focus on developing effective social skills and to build friendships.

Workshops

As IRCY transition into their new lives in Canada, various settlement and orientation related workshops specifically geared for youth was stated by most respondents as an ideal way of teaching and guiding IRCY through various aspects of their unique settlement process. Providing specific orientation sessions/workshops helps to create a direct and explicit information line for IRCY to gain the necessary knowledge to be successful in Canada. Suggested workshop themes included school orientation, nutrition, Canadian culture, dealing with discrimination and racism etc. Other programs that were suggested by three

providers focused on employment, housing, and finances (e.g., orientation about financial management and budgeting) for youth. A specific orientation program targeting refugee youth would also begin to address some current significant service gaps. Another idea that emerged was exploring the notion of a youth specific component within the cultural orientation abroad program.

Other Ideal Program Frameworks

Other ideal qualities for effective programs for IRCY included programs that would be child/youth driven (developed by children/youth) as they are the individuals who would know what would be effective and relevant in their lives. Some providers (5 ISA's, 1 CB for children; 1 ISA for youth) also stressed the importance of including all family members, creating multiple opportunities for parents and IRCY to spend time together.

Providing IRCY with a safe and nurturing environment was also deemed as important for the success of adjustment into Canada. Providers (2 ISA's, 2 CB's for children; 2 ISA's, 2 CB's for youth) mentioned that when IRCY view ISA's as a "second home" where they can feel safe, they develop a sense of belongingness, the agency can then become a great catalyst to build relationships and support networks.

Other suggestions included programs that would promote volunteerism among IRCY, and ensuring that some programs would be long-term program to provide some continuity in IRCY's lives.

CIC Considerations

The underlying purpose of this paper was to contribute to the ongoing program and policy discourse/discussion on IRCY from the perspective of primarily immigrant serving agencies in Canada. Several themes have emerged to better support IRCY that should be seen as future considerations for CIC. It is also understood that new directions are evolving as a result of increased immigrant related funding. Over the past year, several IRCY related programs and pilots have emerged in various parts of Canada including Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) as one example. In no way do the following considerations comprise an exhaustive list, but they do provide some ideas for current and future deliberations.

It is unclear to respondents what CIC's vision is for IRCY related settlement programming in Canada. CIC can play a significant role in supporting IRCY through their adaptation and settlement process that goes beyond past historical federal and provincial jurisdictional silos e.g., leaving IRCY settlement related supports to Provincial Ministries of Education. While recent CIC funding increases have created new opportunities to target services specifically to IRCY such as the Settlement Workers in School program, funding seems haphazard, lacking an overall national vision for current and future investments. How do we maintain national standards and comparable services to IRCY without a clear vision and clarity on the basket of IRCY services and programs within CIC's mandate?

Respondents believe it is time to review the eligibility of the pre-departure orientation or Cultural Orientation Abroad program (COA) funded by CIC. Currently, COA is limited to adult immigrants and refugees. IRCY, particularly youth between the ages of age 13-18 years of age experience their own unique adjustment and settlement challenges that are distinct from their parents. Refugee youth given their current characteristics are not prepared for resettlement to Canada. CIC should consider designing and testing a pre-departure orientation program specifically targeting youth between the ages of 13-18. A consultation process with immigrant and refugee youth across Canada who have been here less than one year would be a logical next step in gathering first hand experiences and information that would have benefited them.

As already stated, there is no national framework that supports the unique settlement needs of IR youth. While immigrant and refugee youth face similar challenges such as adjusting to Canadian schools, dealing with peer pressure and intergenerational conflict that tends to arise within the settlement process, refugee youth would greatly benefit from some targeted support. National programs such as the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) specifically target head of households and adults over 19 years of age. Refugee youth between the ages of 13-18 would benefit from an intensive 2-3 week national settlement and orientation program in their first language when they first arrive in Canada. This proposed program would engage all refugee youth in an age specific orientation program so as to better prepare them to the challenges before them while also providing them with linkages and awareness to age appropriate local community

resources. Such programs could be delivered by older trained youth, perhaps refugee youth engagement workers, who would not only provide information but also include field trips to key local community resources.

While formal childminding services exist in some SPO's for refugee children between 18 months and 12 years during the RAP orientation process, it is not consistent across Canada nor do the resources exist to enhance the program for those SPO's that currently operate such a program. Taking into consideration that most government-assisted refugee children have been born and raised in refugee camps, these children would greatly benefit from more organized settlement related activities from the moment they arrive in Canada.

SPO's from smaller centres in particular highlighted the need for staff training in working effectively with IRCY. Staff training focused on IRCY would increase the capacity of all ISA's and non settlement community based organizations including school districts to work more effectively with children and youth through their settlement process. There is growing awareness and concerns among ISA's on the failure of the school system to adequately respond and support the needs of IRCY. Connected to the issue of staff training and increasing the awareness of the unique needs of IRCY, CIC in partnership with other funding bodies should consider funding a national conference on IRCY that would bring together various stakeholders e.g., SPO's, youth agencies, school based personnel, academics, etc to share local promising practices and support the opportunities for more effective partnerships at both the local and national level.

As earlier noted, current research indicates that up to 90% of all IRCY have experienced some form of migration trauma, e.g., child soldier, war, witness to death of family members, etc. While CIC funding has been invested in some ISA's to support primarily adult related support services, there are no national trauma support programs specifically targeting IRCY. It is also evident that Boards of Education do not have the cultural competency and specialized expertise in supporting traumatized IRCY. Except in a few isolated situations in larger cities, virtually nothing exists to support children and youth to deal with their trauma. If an IRCY trauma is left unaddressed, it can have significant impact in later years including school drop-out, substance abuse, an increase of risk to homelessness and criminal engagement. Within the current immigrant settlement framework, CIC should consider a national program and/or funding guidelines to support IRCY who are suffering from various forms of trauma. An early intervention program targeting IRCY would provide the foundational support for better settlement outcomes.

While many ISA's offer a variety of IRCY related programs not currently funded by CIC such as after-school and summer social and recreational activities, academic supports and leadership training programs, the piece meal nature of often short-term project funding is challenging to maintain the sustainability of current activities. Respondents suggested that perhaps CIC should consider funding, for instance, summer-related settlement program activities to support IRCY through their first summer in Canada. In short, ISA respondents felt that there was a unique role within current mandates to support the settlement and

integration process of IRCY. While there are some excellent programs offered within youth specific community based agencies, the lack of cultural competency and culturally responsive services specifically first language services limits the overall impact of such programs. The partnership challenges and opportunities remain - how do ISA's and CB's work more effectively to better support IRCY? A CIC funded pilot such as testing the deployment of an ISA youth worker into a mainstream youth based agency to test a IRCY case management approach was a suggestion by one respondent.

Closing Remarks

Immigrant serving agencies as well as non-settlement community-based organizations have provided effective programs and services for IRCY and have been instrumental in IRCY's adjustment into Canada. Increasingly, CIC is placing greater efforts on better understanding the lives of IRCY, nevertheless, we need to be more proactive rather than reactive in developing early intervention settlement programs and services that will provide IRCY with enhanced skills, tools and opportunities to successfully transition into Canada. Building collaborative efforts with various stakeholders will allow us to move more systematically and effectively in dealing with the challenges and barriers of immigration and settlement that not only IRCY face but their families' as well. While recent CIC investments in immigrant settlement and language programs are significant and encouraging, we lack an overall national vision within CIC for IRCY related program supports. The situation, if left unaddressed, will be a missed opportunity to better support the settlement outcomes of IRCY in Canada.

Table 1: *Coding System for Challenges and Issues Faced by Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth*

Topic	Definition
Accessing programs	Lack of ability to access programs, whether due to funding or transportation
Canadian culture	General issues about Canadian culture and customs (e.g., food, ways of behaviour), and climate
Deviancy/Anti-social behaviours	Behaviours that are linked to delinquency and deviancy, including peer pressure, gang related issues, aggression, and bullying
Financial issues	Issues that are related to finances (e.g., buying clothes, cell phones) and employment or careers
General language disorders	General communication issues, assessments, language
Mental health	Mental health issues that are related to past trauma and stress
Parent-child relationship	Parent-child conflicts, disciplining and abuse issues, relationships changes due to language brokering and role reversal
Parent separation parents	Issues surrounding difficulties of children separating from parents
Psycho-social/ Peer relationships	Psychological (e.g., self-esteem, identity) and social (e.g., fitting in, sense of belongingness) Language issues as it relates to loneliness and lack of friends
Racism/ Discrimination	Racial or discriminatory behavior towards children/youth, from peers, teachers, and other individuals
School issues	<i>Student-related:</i> Cultural disconnect - verbal and nonverbal language misunderstandings/ misinterpretations <i>Parent-related:</i> disconnect or lack of parental knowledge about school issues, culture, assistance with homework <i>School cultural barriers:</i> curriculum, rules, regulations, settings

Table 2: *Coding System for New or Emerging Challenges and Issues that IRCY Face*

Topic	Definition
Anti-social behaviours	Behaviours that are anti-social and negative (e.g., aggression, gang behaviour)
Discrimination/ Racism	Racial or discriminatory behavior towards children/youth
Higher individual needs	Supports for developmental, psychological needs, disabilities, (e.g., youth who are illiterate, stresses on family or individual)
Infrastructure	Lack of infrastructure and sustainability of programs
Life/Social skills	Life and social skills that are needed to interact with others, to live in Canada (e.g., buying food)
Parenting challenges	Issues related to parenting, including abuse, disciplining
School	School-related issues (e.g., homework)
Socioeconomic status	Issues related to educational attainment, occupational status, and household income

Table 3: *Service Providers' Strategies in Addressing IRCY's Challenges and Issues*

Topic	Definition
Culture promotion	Promoting both native and Canadian culture and language, cultural awareness
Community	Partnerships with local community agencies
Empowerment	Empowering children, youth, parents to take ownership of programs, encourage active participation
Mentorship programs	Mentorship and buddy programs for children and youth
Non-academic programs	Providing social activities, clubs, and programs (not school related)
Positive relationships	Building nurturing and positive interpersonal relationships with IRCY and their families
School orientation	Orientations specifically focusing on school for parents, IRCY
School	Programs for assisting in homework, tutoring
Support	Support, including emotional, instrumental (e.g., clothing, food providing transportation), being advocates for IRCY and family
Workshops/ Individual meetings	Workshops for IRCY, parents on various issues (e.g., Canadian laws, hygiene, school orientation)

Table 4: *Organizations' Challenges in Providing Effective Programs and Services for IRCY*

Topic	Definition
Information/Training	Need more information about families and culture
Lack of collaboration	Need for increased partnerships with other agencies
Lack of informed community	Lack of informed and educated individuals about the needs of IRCY (including teachers, other agencies, public at large)
Lack of recognition	Lack of recognition from community about agencies' efforts and their training expertise that is necessary to assist IRCY
Language barriers	Difficulties in communicating with families due to language barriers
Qualified staff	Organizations' need for more qualified staff for programming
Screening tools	Lack of culturally sensitive screening tools to assess IRCY
Structure, Sustainability of Programs	Lack of funding to sustain programs

Table 5: *Ideal Programs and Services for IRCY*

Topic	Definition
Academics	School-related activities such as homework, tutoring, support
Child/Youth driven	Activities that are directed and developed by IRCY
Employment	Programs and workshops that educate IRCY about employment Opportunities
Family-centered	Activities that include families to promote family unity
Long-term programs	Long-term programs that are sustainable
Mainstream-centered	Programs that are inclusive, integrating “mainstream” children with IRCY, rather than segregated activities
Mentoring	Mentoring programs, whether with native Canadians or “older” IRCY
Psychosocial	Programs that promote psycho-social development such as empowerment, self-esteem, and other mental health issues
Recreational/Social	Non-academic activities
Safe Environment	A place where IRCY can feel safe and feel like they belong
Volunteer	Programs that promote volunteerism
Workshops	Workshops for children, youth, families about school and other adjustment-related issues

Table 6: *Immigrant and Refugee Children Challenges and Issues*

Category	Provincial Regions/Number of Organizations/Age											
	Atlantic		B.C.		Ontario		Prairies		Quebec		Total	
	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y
General language	3 ²	4	1 ¹	3	2 ²	0 ¹	4	4	0	0	10 ⁵	11 ¹
Psycho-social/ Peer relationships	2 ²	3 ²	1 ¹	3 ¹	0 ¹	2	4	4	1	1	8 ⁴	13 ³
School	2 ¹	1 ¹	2 ¹	3 ¹	2 ¹	3	4	3	1	0	11 ³	10 ²
Accessing programs	3 ²	0	2	0	2 ¹	2 ¹	3	2	0	1	10 ³	5 ¹
Canadian culture	2	1	2	2	2	0	4	3	0	0	10	6
Deviancy/Anti- social behaviours	1	1 ²	1	1	1	1	0	4	0	1	3	8 ²
Parent-child relationships	0	1 ¹	3	1	1	2 ¹	3	4	0	1	7	9 ²
Financial issues	2	3	3	1	0 ²	1	2	4	1	0	8 ²	9
Mental health	1 ¹	0 ¹	1	0	0 ¹	1	3	0	0	0	5 ²	1 ¹
Parent separation	0	0 ¹	1	0	2 ¹	1	1	1	0	0	4 ¹	1
Parent discipline	0	0 ¹	2	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	4	2 ¹
Racism/Discrimination	0 ¹	1	0	0 ¹	0	1	0	3	0	0	0 ¹	5 ¹

Note. C = Child; Y = Youth; superscript numbers represent number of community-based organization response.

Table 7: *New or Emerging Challenges and Issues*

Category	Provincial Region/Number of Organizations					
	Atlantic	B.C.	Ontario	Prairies	Quebec	Total
Infrastructure	2 ²	2 ¹	1 ¹	6	0	11 ⁴
Higher individual needs	2	3	1	4	0	10
Life/Social skills	1 ²	2	0 ²	3	0	6 ⁴
Parenting challenges	1	2	0 ²	0	0	3 ²
SES status	2 ¹	2 ¹	0	2	0	6 ²
School	1	2	1	0	0	4
Discrimination/Racism	1 ¹	0 ¹	0	1	0	2 ²
Anti-social behaviours	0	0	0 ¹	3	0	3 ¹
Disconnect with community	0	0	0 ¹	2	0	2 ¹

Note. Superscript numbers represent number of community-based organization responses.

Table 8: *Strategies Used by Service Providers*

Category	Provincial Region/Number of Organizations					
	Atlantic	B.C	Ontario	Prairies	Quebec	Total
Workshops/Individual meetings	3 ¹	4	3 ¹	6	1	17 ²
Support	2 ¹	3 ¹	2 ¹	6	1	14 ³
Non- academic programs	2 ²	4 ¹	1	5	1	13 ³
School orientation	1 ¹	2	1 ¹	4	1	9 ²
Mentorship programs	2 ²	3	0 ¹	5	1	11 ³
Culture promotion	1 ²	1 ¹	2 ²	4	0	8 ⁵
School	2 ¹	2	1	3	1	9 ¹
Community	1 ¹	2	1	2	1	7 ¹
Empowerment	0	2	2	3	0	7
Positive Relationships	1	0 ¹	0 ¹	2	0	3 ²
Safe environment	0	0 ¹	0	1	0	1 ¹

Note. Superscript numbers represent number of community-based organization responses.

Table 9: *Organizational Challenges in Providing Effective Programs and Services*

Category	Provincial Region/Number of Organizations					Total
	Atlantic	B.C.	Ontario	Prairies	Quebec	
Structure, sustainability of programs	2 ¹	3	1	3	0	9 ¹
Qualified staff	2	3 ¹	2 ¹	2	0	9 ²
Lack of informed community	0 ¹	2	3	3	0	8 ¹
Lack of collaboration	1 ²	3	1	2	0	7 ²
Information/training	2 ¹	0	2 ²	2	0	6 ³
Language barriers	3	0	0	2	0	5
Lack of recognition	2	2 ¹	1 ¹	2	0	8 ²
Screening tools	0	1 ¹	0	4	0	5 ¹

Note. Superscript numbers represent number of community-based organization responses.

Table 10: *Ideal Programs and Services for IRCY for Children and Youth*

Category	Provincial Region/Number of Organizations/Age											
	Atlantic		B.C.		Ontario		Prairies		Quebec		Total	
	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y
Recreational/Social	3 ¹	3 ¹	2 ¹	4 ¹	0 ¹	2	5	6	1	0	11 ³	15 ²
Academics	3 ²	3	2	1 ¹	2	3	2	4	1	0	11 ²	11 ¹
Workshops	2	2 ¹	2 ¹	2	3 ¹	1 ¹	1	2	0	0	8 ²	7 ²
Mainstream-centered	2 ¹	4 ²	2 ¹	1	0	1	2	3	0	0	6 ²	9 ²
Psychosocial	2 ¹	1	2	3	1	1	3	3	0	0	8 ¹	8
Family-centered	0 ¹	0	1	0	2 ¹	1	2	0	0	0	5 ²	1
Child/Youth driven	0	1	0	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	6
Safe environment	0 ¹	0 ¹	1	0 ¹	0 ¹	0	1	1	0	1	2 ²	2 ²
Mentoring	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	3
Long-term programs	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Volunteer	0	0 ¹	0	0 ¹	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1 ²
Employment	0	0	0 ¹	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	1 ¹	3

Note. Superscript numbers represent number of community-based organization responses.

Appendix A

Organization Contributors

BRITISH COLUMBIA

- a. Boys and Girls Club of Greater Vancouver*
- b. Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria
- c. Immigrant Services Society of BC
- d. MOSAIC
- e. SUCCESS

PRAIRIE REGION

Alberta

- a. Edmonton Immigrant Services
- b. Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Manitoba

- a. IRCOM HOUSE
- b. Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, Inc
- c. NEEDS CENTRE

Saskatchewan

- a. Regina Open Door Society
- b. Saskatoon Open Door Society

ONTARIO

- a. Advisory and Support Services
- b. New Canadians' Centre of Excellence Inc.
- c. Peel Children's Aid Society*
- d. Region of Peel*
- e. Settlement & Integration Services Organization (SISO)

QUEBEC

- a. PROMIS

ATLANTIC CANADA REGION

New Brunswick

- a. Multicultural Association of the Greater Moncton Area

Newfoundland

- a. Association for New Canadians
- b. Daybreak Parent Child Centre*

Nova Scotia

- a. YMCA*
- b. Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA)

Prince Edward Island

- a. PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada

* denotes non-immigrant settlement community based organizations

Appendix B

Interview

Focusing on recent immigrant who have been in Canada for 5 years or less:

1. As your organization provide services and programs, what do you think are the top 3-5 challenges/issues that are faced by:
 - a. Children (3 – 10 years of age)?
 - b. Youth (11 – 18 years)?
2. Over the course of the past 5 years, do you see any “new” or emerging challenges and issues that these IRCY face that were not an issue previously?
3. What strategies are you using to address these challenges/issues?
4. Of your programs, are there any challenges or issues besides inadequate funding and staffing that you come across in providing these programs and services? Top 3?
5. In your view, what types of program would be most useful for:
 - a. Children?
 - b. Youth?
6. What role and responsibilities, besides funding, do you see for Citizenship and Immigration Canada in relation to the success of IRCY?
7. Are you aware of programs or services in other agencies that you think are important for children and youth? (Describe a particular program of noteworthiness and why it is seen as effective).