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ISSUES CONFRONTING NEWCOMER YOUTH IN CANADA: ALTERNATIVE MODELS FOR A NATIONAL YOUTH HOST PROGRAM

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CERIS Working Paper No. 39

June 2005

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**Issues Confronting Newcomer Youth in Canada:
Alternative Models for a National Youth Host Program**

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ABSTRACT

The Host program, established in 1991, is one of a package of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)-funded settlement programs designed to assist newcomers with integration into Canadian life. It does this by matching newcomers with host volunteers who are familiar with Canadian ways. Under federal-provincial agreements, British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec assumed responsibility for the design, administration and delivery of settlement services to newcomers who settle in those provinces. A study, commissioned by the Host Program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, had as its primary objective, the development of three models of service delivery for youth within Host and Host-like programs. A literature review and a survey of executive directors in service provider organizations by graduate students were employed to generate the models. The models generated were based one in which the centrality of schooling in young people's lives was the paramount consideration; a preventative model geared to newcomer youth identified as potentially at-risk; and a model that employed innovative strategies in order to provide a 'second chance' to newcomer youth who had experienced multiple at-risk factors. While service providers noted an array of promising practices, only a minority indicated that formal evaluations of them were employed.

KEY WORDS: Host Program, newcomer youth, integration, promising practices, models of service delivery

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper emerged from a project entitled: “A Study of Youth Host Models,” that was carried out for Citizenship and Immigration Canada in 2005. The project principal investigator, Paul Anisef, gratefully acknowledges the funders’ support for this project and the help and advice of John Biles of the Metropolis Project Team, the contractor on this project, and the assistance of Etta Baichman-Anisef, who served as the Project Co-ordinator. All of the Executive Directors of the Service Provider organizations who devoted their time to complete the survey questionnaires deserve a special note of thanks. Kelli Phytian, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Western Ontario, assisted us in conducting the analysis of the Ethnic Diversity Survey, and we are grateful to Kelli for this help. Finally, the series editor, Michael Doucet, did an extraordinary job of converting the report submitted to Citizenship and Immigration Canada into a CERIS Working Paper; we are grateful for his attention to detail.

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INTRODUCTION

The Host program is one of a package of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)-funded settlement programs designed to assist newcomers with their integration into Canadian life. Host helps immigrants overcome the stress of moving to a new country by matching them with volunteers familiar with Canadian ways. The host volunteers help newcomers by being there for moral support, directing them to available services, helping them practice English or French, including newcomers in social events, and, whenever possible, directing them to contacts in their field of work. At the same time, the volunteers learn about other cultures and other countries, thereby providing an important knowledge link concerning the benefits of immigration.

The Host program first began in 1985 in six cities across Canada. It was originally established as a series of pilot projects in response to the mobilization of community efforts to support the settlement of Indo-Chinese refugees in Canada during the late 1970s. During that period, nearly half of the refugees to Canada were privately sponsored (CIC, 2003). Private sponsorship consisted of a group of individuals or an organization undertaking the necessary moral and financial obligations to assist the refugees they sponsored to rebuild their lives in Canada. These refugees were provided with emotional support and friendship, as well as access to the sponsors' networks.

In 1986, a study conducted by what was then known as Employment and Immigration Canada compared privately-sponsored refugees with government-sponsored refugees, and concluded that newcomers settled more quickly when support systems were available. Consequently, in 1988, the Host program was extended to government-assisted refugees as a pilot project. In 1991, the Host program was formally established as a fully-funded program, and the mandate was expanded to include all refugees and immigrants. Under federal-provincial agreements, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Quebec have assumed responsibility for the design, administration, and delivery of settlement services to newcomers who settle in those provinces. These services, however, need to be reasonably comparable to those offered in the rest of Canada. From the standpoint of this study, the three provinces in question can be said to be delivering Host-like programs to the immigrants and refugees who settle within their borders.

MANDATE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE HOST PROGRAM

The main goals of the Host program have been articulated in two sources. The first source, the so-called *Host Handbook for Service Provider Organizations*,¹ which is posted on CIC's web site, states:

[the Host program helps] immigrants overcome the stress of moving to a new country. Volunteers familiar with Canadian ways help newcomers learn about available services and how to use them, practice English and French, get contacts in their field of work and participate in the community. At the same time, host

¹ <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomer/host-1e.html#host2>

Canadians learn about new cultures, other lands and different languages; they make new friends and they strengthen community life.

The second source we referred to was CIC's *Settlement Evaluation Framework*.² This framework was developed in 2004 in cooperation with Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) throughout Canada as part of CIC's Contribution Accountability Framework. It contains an official statement of Host's desired outcomes. These are five in number for the medium term (3 to 5 years), and, coincidentally, they are the same as outcomes for Citizenship and Immigration Canada's other major settlement initiatives, namely, the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation program (ISAP) and the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program (LINC). Only two of them overlap with ISAP. One of them (speaking English or French) relates to LINC.

Of all three settlement programs available to immigrants and refugees, Host is, by far, the smallest, receiving approximately 3 per cent of LINC's budget and 8 per cent of ISAP's budget. However, and this is important to note, Host contains two desired outcomes that clearly distinguish it from ISAP and LINC. These outcomes are:

- Host communities, including francophone minority communities, welcome and engage newcomers; and
- Newcomers of all ages and members of host communities are engaged in diverse social networks.

We shall return to these two distinguishing outcomes in the next section of the paper.

Under the Host program, eligible organizations receive funds to recruit, screen, train, and match eligible Host volunteers. Organizations that are funded under this program are expected to perform a large variety of tasks including:

- program promotion;
- screening and assessment of Host applicants;
- orientation for the Host volunteers, as well as orientation for newcomers;
- eligibility screening of newcomers;
- matching newcomers/hosts according to mutual interests;
- monitoring and support of the matches; and
- reporting to CIC (financial, statistical, and program activity)

In those parts of Canada where direct Host program funding is possible, there are approximately 40 agencies providing services under the Host program. There are seven programs in

² <http://integration-net.cic.gc.ca/inet/english/caf-cipc/documents/j/J06.htm>

the Atlantic region, nine programs in the Prairies-Northern Territories region, 23 programs in Ontario, and one in the Yukon.

Currently, a limited number of CIC-funded SPOs across the country have enhanced their Host activities to provide settlement-support services that are specifically targeted to children and youth. Other organizations provide support to children and youth on an as-needed basis through their regular Host program. It is important to note, however, that the youth component of the Host program is not equally developed in all regions of Canada due to limited resources and the particular priorities of individual SPOs who deliver settlement services and programs. While CIC has developed national guidelines for the Host program, these do not include guidelines to address the needs of children and youth.

The importance attributed to the re-settlement of immigrant children was recently emphasized in a report released by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration:

immigrant children may face unique settlement problems. Beyond the 'regular' difficulties that most children face, such as peer pressure, the tribulations of the teen years and academic concerns, many immigrant youth must also adjust to a new culture and language. Although it is commonly believed that children can acclimatize to a new environment better than adults, witnesses appearing before the Committee indicated that more needs to be done to foster the development of young newcomers and that programs specifically geared to their needs should be augmented (House of Commons, 2003:16-17).

The development of separate guidelines and principles for matching services for newcomer children and youth should be viewed as the next stage in the overall evolution of the Host program. This can best be achieved by drawing on the strengths and experiences of SPOs that already have been involved in administering settlement services to newcomer children and youth. The greatest challenge we face is to design a national Youth program that responds to broad national goals and values, while remaining sufficiently flexible to permit successful delivery and administration across different regions and local contexts. One potential barrier to successful implementation, raised repeatedly by service providers, is the lack of adequate funding within the Host program.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research study, as commissioned by the Host Program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, was established to explore and evaluate existing Youth Host models and activities that are being delivered across Canada. Five objectives were formulated for this project:

1. Identify the benefits and challenges within the various models as expressed by individual SPOs;
2. Identify effective practices and recommendations with regard to improving the delivery of youth activities within the Host program as expressed by individual SPOs;

3. Conduct a literature review into studies of the experiences of immigrant youth in Canada, focusing on the areas of health, including mental health, education, employment, and social services;
4. Propose models of service delivery for youth within Host and host-like programs based on the recommendations of individual SPOs; and
5. Develop guidelines/definitions for the youth Host program based on the proposed models recommended by individual SPOs.

As we indicated in the previous section, there are two desired outcomes of the Host program that distinguish it from either LINC or ISAP. Host communities should welcome and engage newcomers generally, and newcomers of all ages and members of host communities should be engaged in diverse social networks. In a recent analysis, Kunz argued that social capital (defined as networks of social relations that provide access to needed resources and supports) could be employed as a useful framework to examine the impact of the Host program:

being able to function and participate in any society requires an understanding of the rules and norms, both written and unwritten that direct people's behaviour. Cultural reciprocity, or the process of exchanging cultural cues and knowledge equally between hosts and newcomers, provides an additional important component of the foundation of integration. Many of these can not be learned in the classrooms or from textbooks. Rather, they are acquired through informal communication (Kunz 2005: 3, 16).

A PROFILE OF NEWCOMER YOUTH

Before presenting an overview of the methodology employed in this study, it is important that we provide a brief socio-demographic profile of immigrant youth in Canada. This description supplies a context for the development of options for the delivery and administration of services to newcomer youth.

Figures from the 2001 Census indicate that of the 10,405,697 permanent Canadian residents under the age of 30, 1,097,623 or approximately 10 per cent, were newcomers of immigrant status. Statistics Canada, in projecting to 2017, recently forecast that our vivid cultural tapestry will become even more intricate in the future; people of visible-minority status will compose about one fifth of all Canadians by that date (Hall, 2005).

Newcomers and newcomer youth are not evenly distributed across Canada. In examining information derived from the Ethnic Diversity Survey³, one can see that Ontario can lay claim to the

³ According to Statistics Canada, the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) was developed by Statistics Canada in partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage in order to provide new and important information on the ethnic and cultural background of people in Canada and how it relates to their lives in Canada today.

The survey followed the 2001 Census with the census providing the frame for the sample. The target

lion's share of all newcomer youth to Canada, having in excess of 50 per cent of all age groups, followed by British Columbia with approximately 19 per cent of all age groups, and Quebec with roughly 14 per cent (Table 1). Since very few newcomer youth of any age group are found in the Atlantic Provinces, and the resulting cell sizes are too small to report, no such breakdowns can be provided for the Atlantic provinces.

Table 1: Proportion of Newcomer Youth by Age and Region, 2001

| Region | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Atlantic | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| Quebec | 10.7 | 14.1 | 16.7 |
| Ontario | 60.5 | 55.8 | 51.9 |
| Prairies | 8.5 | 12.3 | 12.0 |
| British Columbia | 20.3 | 17.8 | 19.4 |
| Total in sample | 410 | 440 | 490 |

Source: Specially prepared runs from the Ethnic Diversity Survey

According to our analysis of the data from the Ethnic Diversity Survey, for youth aged 15-29 in Canada, 16.4 per cent can be categorized as first generation, and 21.5 per cent can be said to have second generation status.⁴ Thus, a substantial proportion of youth in this age grouping are either immigrant children or the children of immigrants (Table 2). We can also see that there are important regional variations with respect to generational status. By way of illustration, less than 10 per cent of youth aged 15-29 in the Atlantic provinces and Quebec could be categorized as first generation, while fully one-quarter of youth in this age group within British Columbia belonged to the first generation. These patterns generally hold for second-generation youth as well. It is interesting to note that, in British Columbia 55.4 per cent of youth captured in the survey were either first- or second-generation. Ontario was second at 51.7 per cent, the Prairies were third at 30.3 per cent, Quebec was fourth at 20.8 per cent, and the Atlantic provinces were fifth at 10.7 per cent. At the other extreme, more than 70 per cent of youth living in both Atlantic Canada and Quebec could be classified as belonging to the fourth generation, leaving them well removed from the immigrant experience. Furthermore, at 8.4 per cent, Quebec had the lowest proportion of third-generation youth of any of

population for the survey was persons aged 15 years or older living in private households in the 10 provinces. In all, 42,500 individuals were included in this survey (Statistics Canada 2003). The EDS information presented in Tables 1-3 was made possible through receipt of a three-year Standard Grant that was awarded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council in 2004.

⁴ It should be noted that it is the first generation of newcomer youth that this study targets.

the regions. Programs designed to service newcomer youth would, therefore, need to respond to such regional variations.

Table 2: Proportion of Youth by Generational Status and Region

| Generational Status | Atlantic | Quebec | Ontario | Prairies | British Columbia | Canada |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| First | 3.7 | 9.7 | 22.6 | 11.3 | 24.9 | 16.4 |
| Second | 7.0 | 11.1 | 29.1 | 19.0 | 30.5 | 21.5 |
| Third | 12.3 | 8.4 | 21.2 | 36.3 | 24.9 | 20.4 |
| Fourth | 77.1 | 70.8 | 27.1 | 33.5 | 19.8 | 41.8 |
| Total in sample | 720 | 2,260 | 3,600 | 1,540 | 1,160 | 9,290 |

Notes: First Generation = born outside of Canada

Second Generation = born in Canada, with one or both parents born outside of Canada

Third Generation = born in Canada, with both parents born inside Canada and at least one grandparent born outside of Canada

Fourth generation = born in Canada, with both parents and all grandparents born in Canada

Source: Specially prepared runs from the Ethnic Diversity Survey

In terms of geographical location, the distribution of Canadian youth by generational status also showed considerable variation. For comparative purposes, data have been prepared for three types of spatial units: 1) individually for Canada's eight largest Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs),⁵ 2) collectively for all other CMAs, and 3) collectively for those areas of Canada that lie outside of its CMAs (Table 3). For example, over a third of the youth aged 15-29 living in Toronto or Vancouver were identified as first-generation, with Winnipeg a rather distant third on this measure at about 22 per cent. Similarly over a third of youth living in Toronto and Vancouver could be categorized as second-generation, with Hamilton coming second on this measure at almost 38 per cent second-generation, and Calgary a more distant fourth at 26.2 per cent. With regard to first-generation youth, it can be seen that there was a great deal of variation across Canadian CMAs in terms of the share of all youth captured in this category. The proportion of first-generation youth ranged from a low of 10.9 per cent in 'Other CMAs' to a high of 35.6 per cent in Vancouver. The proportion of first- and second-generation youth living in non-CMAs remained quite low. Similarly, a strong variation in the proportion of second-generation youth living in different Canadian cities as well as non-CMAs can be observed in the data. At the other extreme, the data suggest that almost

⁵ For reasons of confidentiality, data on Quebec City could not be presented separately, and had to be grouped under the Other CMAs category.

half of the youth living in the smaller CMAs could be classified as members of the fourth generation, a figure that rose to almost two-thirds for youth living outside of any CMA. Again, these differences provide an important context for the delivery and administration of services to newcomer youth in Canada.

Table 3: Generational Status by Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)

| CMA | First Generation | Second Generation | Third Generation | Fourth Generation | Total in sample |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Toronto | 35.6 | 38.2 | 13.3 | 12.9 | 1,610 |
| Montreal | 17.5 | 20.8 | 11.1 | 50.6 | 1,070 |
| Vancouver | 34.7 | 33.2 | 19.3 | 12.8 | 690 |
| Ottawa-Gatineau | 19.7 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 42.3 | 360 |
| Calgary | 17.5 | 26.2 | 32.3 | 23.9 | 350 |
| Edmonton | 12.0 | 25.4 | 38.2 | 24.4 | 310 |
| Hamilton | 20.1 | 37.9 | 19.2 | 22.9 | 210 |
| Winnipeg | 22.1 | 23.2 | 37.4 | 17.3 | 200 |
| Other CMAs | 10.9 | 15.9 | 24.3 | 48.9 | 1,600 |
| Non-CMAs | 3.3 | 10.9 | 21.5 | 64.3 | 2,900 |

Notes: First Generation = born outside of Canada

Second Generation = born in Canada, with one or both parents born outside of Canada

Third Generation = born in Canada, with both parents born inside Canada and at least one grandparent born outside of Canada

Fourth generation = born in Canada, with both parents and all grandparents born in Canada

Source: Specially prepared runs from the Ethnic Diversity Survey

METHODOLOGY

Literature Review

A graduate student from York University was recruited by the principal investigator to research and write a literature review as proposed under the Objectives for this project. To ensure

good coverage of published and unpublished sources, the student conducted an electronic search employing the full range of search engines within the York University library, government of Canada publications, and relevant web sites, such as www.settlement.org.

Descriptive Reports on Host-like programs in Manitoba, British Columbia, and Quebec

The Metropolis Team assisted the principal investigator in hiring graduate students from RIIM: Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis; IM: Montréal Centre for Inter-university Research on Immigration, Integration and Urban Dynamics; and PCERII: Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration to assist in producing provincial reports for Manitoba, British Columbia, and Quebec. The National Host Working Group (NHWG) provided the names and coordinates of key informants in these provinces, and the principal investigator developed a common template for the graduate students to employ to gather information within each of these jurisdictions. The template explored the following dimensions:

- the amount of money allocated to Host-like programs in Manitoba, British Columbia, and Quebec;
- the terms of reference of Host-like programs (e.g. program promotion, eligibility screening of newcomers, procedures for matching newcomers and hosts) in Manitoba, British Columbia, and Quebec;
- a list of organizations that deliver Host-like programs in Manitoba, British Columbia, and Quebec;
- the guidelines employed within Host-like programs in Manitoba, British Columbia, and Quebec; and
- the benefits and challenges encountered in delivering Host-like programs in Manitoba, British Columbia, and Quebec.

A teleconference call was arranged in the third week of February among CIC officials, the principal investigator, the project manager, and the graduate students to clarify the dimensions that should be employed in writing each descriptive report, and to clarify methodological issues.⁶

Survey of Service-Provider Organizations (SPOs)

Early on in this project, a decision was taken that a survey of SPOs in Host and Host-like programs across Canada should be conducted, and that the information from this survey would comprise the primary data to be used by the graduate students to write their sub-reports on Quebec,

⁶ The full sub-reports for these provinces can be located in Annexes 3 (Manitoba), 4 (British Columbia), and 5 (Quebec) in Anisef (2005).

Manitoba, and British Columbia.⁷ At the First National Host Conference that took place in Toronto on 16 and 17 February 2005, members of the National Host Working Group explained the project to the representatives of the SPOs in attendance in order to prepare them for the survey. Within two weeks of the conference, and after the survey instrument had been finalized, all SPOs were contacted and sent the survey as an email attachment along with a cover letter explaining the project. The SPOs were asked to complete the survey 'on-line' and send it back as an attachment. This gave graduate students the advantage of obtaining information that could be easily analyzed and employed in their final draft sub-reports.⁸ Non-respondents were contacted by telephone after seven working days to encourage them to complete the survey.

The results from the survey were mixed, with an excellent response rate from the Manitoba SPOs and from those offering Host programs in the unspecified provinces, but a much weaker one from those in Quebec and British Columbia (Table 4). Fortunately, the response rate was higher in British Columbia and Quebec from the SPOs that provided youth services.

Table 4: Responses to the Survey Questionnaire from Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) by Region

| | Quebec | Manitoba | British Columbia | Host Program Provinces |
|--|--------|----------|------------------|------------------------|
| No. of SPOs contacted | 86 | 13 | 60* | 40 |
| Completed Surveys | 16 | 10 | 14 | 26 |
| No. of SPOs from original list offering youth services | 46 | 5 | 14 | 33 |
| No. of SPOs offering youth services who completed surveys | 10 | 3 | 14 | 25 |
| Overall Response Rate | 18.6% | 76.9% | 23.3% | 65.0% |
| Response rate from SPOs offering youth services | 21.7% | 60.0% | 35.7% | 75.8% |
| % of SPOs offering Youth Services that responded | 46.5% | 38.5% | 23.3% | 82.5% |

* A contact list of 80 SPOs was provided and all contacted. Only 60 subsequently provided email coordinates.

⁷ A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Annex 6 of Anisef (2005).

⁸ In some instances, SPOs did not have access to email and were faxed copies of the survey which they completed and then returned to graduate students. It should also be noted that a draft of the survey was first pre-tested on several SPOs in the Greater Toronto Area. Changes were then made to the survey based on their comments. Graduate students in Manitoba, Quebec and British Columbia employed a slightly modified version of the survey instrument for administration in their provinces. A French translation was produced for Quebec.

NEWCOMER YOUTH IN CANADA: WHAT IS KNOWN

At the outset of the project on Youth Host Models, an extensive literature search was carried out that built upon an existing review that had been prepared for *Managing Two Worlds: The Needs and Concern of Immigrant Youth in Ontario* (Anisef and Kilbride 2002). The review of the literature confirmed that relatively little real attention has been paid to this age group in North America, and particularly in Canada. Their needs, whether the youth came as very young children or as adolescents, have not been systematically documented, nor have services for them been systematically identified.⁹ What the review did contribute was a sense of the major issues confronting this age group, which include:

- identity development confounded by dual sources of identity, when home and peer groups come from different cultures;
- language issues that arise, particularly in school;
- lack of recognition, especially for older youth, of prior learning experience;
- conflicts in values beyond those characteristic of many adolescents, namely those between home and peer group, as well as clashes between the values of institutions, especially those of the family and those of the school as representative of the larger community;
- differences in issues for male and female youth that are not necessarily found in all youth's experiences, but are characteristic of some cultures in particular; and
- recent increases in poverty among immigrant relative to non-immigrant groups.

The review of the literature also identified some programs that were being offered to youth in various locations in Canada. What follows is a summary of the literature that was uncovered in this project, grouped according to the most relevant categories for a study about the potential for establishing youth host programs. These categories include health and mental health, educational attainment, access to employment and economic mobility, and social services.

Health and Mental Health

The healthy development and integration of newcomer youth into all spheres of Canadian society is dependent on numerous, often interrelated, factors. A primary determinant of the physical, social, and emotional well-being of a younger person is the overall family environment, but several other components characteristic of the newcomer experience can influence the future health status of immigrant youth. The literature review confirmed the fundamental importance of newcomer youth

⁹ The website at www.Settlement.org provides a relatively complete listing of research reports on newcomer youth and reports that focus on the provision of social services to newcomer youth.

being part of a strong and loving family. In addition, studies have shown that a stable family income improves the likelihood of living in safe neighbourhoods and attending good schools. According to the literature, the absence of some or all of these elements in newcomer households often made it difficult for parents to create a supportive environment that could enhance the future well-being of their children.

Traumatic pre-migration experiences also have been found to have had an impact on newcomer youth and their experiences in settling and integrating into Canadian society. Many youth witnessed injuries to members of their families as a consequence of ethnic cleansing, combat and/or constant gunfire. The groups of youth most frequently associated with these types of experiences included youth from Somalia, Afghanistan, and the former Yugoslavia.

Most researchers agree that very little is known about the physical, psychosocial, and mental health problems of immigrant children. Both the Canadian Ethno-cultural Council (CEC) and the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) concur that the mental health of immigrants and refugees remains an important priority for service providers (Beiser, 1999: 162).

The literature review, however, did find a number of significant studies concerning the health of Canadian youth. A federal-provincial study, *Toward a Healthy Future* (Walker 1999), reported that “Canadians are among the healthiest people in the world; however this good health is not enjoyed equally by everyone.”¹⁰ According to Beiser (1999), data obtained from community-based samples, suggest that some newcomer children have experienced greater risk for alcohol abuse, drug addiction, delinquency, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The country’s youth population is suffering from stress that is evident in increased rates of unhealthy practices such as heavy smoking, having unprotected sex, and dropping out of school, as well as feeling depressed and suicidal. It has been argued that stress-related problems among young people can be linked to high unemployment and pressure to perform well in school. The same source quotes Shaun Peck, a doctor at the British Columbia Health Department, who believes that dropping out of school early can be very damaging to a youngster’s future well-being. Because their chances for secure employment are lower, they will probably be less healthy in the future, given the link shown between income and health. According to this report, the persistent gap in health status between people of high income and low income is most apparent among youth and aboriginal groups (Beiser 1999).

Youth, Migration, and Health

The settlement, adaptation, and integration process of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth into Canadian society is a multifaceted experience involving numerous different factors. Studies on immigration and youth have shown that youth experience a variety of emotional and cognitive adjustments, as well as conflicts related to the realities of life in their new country. They are, therefore, more likely to experience fear of the future; loneliness; alienation; school difficulties, including truancy; and a sense of inferiority that can be related directly to socioeconomic status (Israelowitz and Slonim-Nevo 2002). According to the literature, many of these challenges faced by immigrant youth can lead to a variety of mental and physical health problems.

¹⁰ The results of the federal-provincial study were reported in William Walker, “Canadians healthier but stress hits young,” *Toronto Star*, 17 September 1999, A1.

In many cases, the settlement, adaptation, and integration process can be seen as an event of extraordinary intensity and stress. A number of recent studies of immigrant and refugee youth have revealed significant adaptive and integration problems that previously had been eclipsed by the stereotype that such youth were problem-free and had high rates of academic success (Seat 1997; Chiu and Ring 1998; Rivera-Sinclair 1997; Rousseau 1997; Goodenow and Espin 1993; Huang 1989; Pawiluk, Grizenko, Chan-Yip, Gantous, Mathew, and Nguyen 1996).

For immigrant and refugee youth, the experience of migration occasions significant life changes in their physical environment, socio-cultural community, and interpersonal affiliations. The various reviews of the literature on this topic have pointed to long lists of variables to consider, such as language fluency, age at migration, gender, financial resources, degree of identification with the host culture, amount of social interaction with the host society, and so on (Berry 1987; Furnham and Bochner 1986; Church 1982). In Canada, in addition to facing the usual and highly-intensive developmental issues specific to adolescence, namely as a period typically associated with the difficult process of growth and independence, immigrant and refugee newcomer youth must start a new socialization process. They must meet new academic challenges; learn new expectations from their schools, teachers and parents; gain acceptance into new peer groups; and develop new kinds of social competencies (Seat 1998).

Socioeconomic Status and Health

The literature review also uncovered evidence that the socio-economic environment of newcomer children and adolescents is a determinant of their health and well-being. A stable family income improves the likelihood of living in a safe neighbourhood and attending a good school. A recent analysis of data obtained from a longitudinal study of children and youth indicated that 30 per cent of all immigrant children live in families whose total income falls below the official poverty line (Beiser, Shik, and Curyk 1999). In his book, *Strangers at the Gate: The Boat Peoples' First Ten Years in Canada*, Beiser (1999) evaluated the existence of a link between employment and mental health through the analysis of community surveys of refugees and Canadian residents in Vancouver. He found that newcomer youth were twice as likely to suffer from depression as individuals aged thirty-five and older, adding that "statistics on suicide are also consistent in portraying the young as highly distressed and vulnerable" (Beiser 1999, 81-82). Furthermore, Beiser argued that it would be essential to alleviate the problems associated with job discrimination and economic disparity in order to curb increasing rates of depression among newcomer youth and facilitate their successful integration into Canadian life (Beiser 1999, 162).¹¹

It is apparent from this review of the literature on newcomer youth that socio-economic status has a serious impact on the healthy emotional and social development of children and adolescents. A Host program focused on this age cohort could prove to be beneficial in helping to overcome such barriers.

¹¹ *Strangers at the Gate*, although an invaluable contribution to understanding the life situation of refugees in Canada, is not attempting to present the life of newcomer youth in particular, about which little research exists.

Family and Health

Aside from socioeconomic status, the research studies examined confirmed the fundamental importance of youth being part of a strong and loving family. Researchers noted that immigrant children with unstable families were “less likely to prosper scholastically and are more likely to become delinquent” (Beiser 1999, 162). Family stability and ethnic resilience have been shown to have a considerable impact on the behaviour of immigrant and refugee children. This form of social capital is regarded as an essential component of well-being, and may help foster personal achievement. Moreover, a lack of proper parental supervision has been found to be linked to instances of hyperactivity amongst children (Ma 2002), while other studies have shown that an over-involvement of parents in the lives of immigrant youth can lead to higher instances of stress and greater health issues (Hamilton 2002). Studies have suggested that the over-involvement of parents often stems from intergenerational conflicts which are, themselves, a result of differences in acculturation.

Hamilton’s study (2002) on the acculturation process of immigrants to their new society suggested that immigrant youth tend to assimilate more with their new society than their parents and, therefore, tend to identify more with their new culture. Such intergenerational conflict has been found to cause great tension and stress because of differing values and notions concerning the appropriate amount of parental involvement in the youths’ lives. Hamilton used classical assimilation theory, as well as segmented assimilation theory, to illustrate how assimilation progresses over the generations. According to her study, however, this assimilation is not always positive; it sometimes means adopting the poor health habits of their new society such as smoking and unhealthy eating and drinking.

Another issue that has been considered by some researchers is the impact of the separation among family members that can occur during the migration process (Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie 2002). In this particular study, the authors explored the relatively common occurrence of the separation of youth from their parents during the migration process, and the effect of this phenomenon on their mental health. Their findings showed that children who arrived in the US as a family unit, without any separation from their immediate family en route, were less likely to report depressive symptoms than children whose families had separated during the migratory process. Furthermore, they concluded that the reunification process can be just as stressful as families must learn to live together again having undergone different acculturation processes. They also noted the common tendency of fathers to reaffirm their role as leader of the household by imposing strong restrictions on their children’s social activity, which could cause stress for youth trying to fit in with peers and become independent.

Gender and Health

A study conducted by Ma (2002) entitled *The First Ten Years in Canada: A Multi-Level Assessment of Behavioural and Emotional Problems of Immigrant Children*, pointed out that gender plays the single most important role in predicting the behavioural and emotional problems of immigrant youth. Ma argued that male immigrant children demonstrated significantly worse records than females in five of six outcome measures involving conduct disorder, property offenses, hyperactive behaviour, pro-social behaviour, and emotional disorder; but that no major differences were found based on country of origin. Ma concluded that more social counseling services are needed, especially for male youths.

Ethnicity and Health

Wadhvani's study (1999) was prompted by a recent and notable increase in suicides among South Asian youth. It was focused on the specific issue of suicide ideation among South Asian youth in Canada. This study revealed a number of disturbing and distressing trends amongst these youth:

- 30 per cent of the 104 participants indicated that they had considered suicide;
- of those who had considered suicide, 50 per cent thought that family pressures were the number one reason for thinking about suicide as an option;
- 60 per cent of participants cited school as the main focus for their sense of stress;
- 80 per cent of those who had admitted to having engaged in suicidal thoughts were females; and
- 60 per cent of the participants who indicated that they were always depressed had considered suicide (Wadhvani 1999).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Much of the literature on the health and well-being of newcomer youth has been informed by the theory of ethnic resiliency. Steinhauer has defined resiliency as the ability to achieve unusually good adaptation in the face of severe stress and/or the ability of the stressed person to rebound to the pre-stress level of adaptation (Steinhauer 1998, 51). Moreover, other scholars have suggested that the ability to identify with and respect one's cultural origin can both help to foster personal resilience and improve the likelihood for healthy development and integration (Beiser, Shik, and Curyk 1999).

According to the literature, the problems facing newcomer children and youth are numerous and threatening to both their physical and social development. The risk associated with maladaptive experiences is high among children from disadvantaged populations. Most researchers consider the socioeconomic disparity between mainstream and newcomer groups as the primary determinant of negative development (Beiser, Shik, and Curyk 1999; Bertrand 1998; Fralick and Hyndman 1998; James 1997; Steinhauer 1998). To date, the research in this area strongly suggests that adjusting to a new culture and language, as well as to new surroundings and peer expectations, is difficult to achieve without family stability and economic security. The inability to adapt successfully to the norms of society often results in problems at school, and creates a greater risk for substance abuse, delinquency, and depression.

In a 1997 study, Delores James reported that newcomer children and adolescents in the United States experienced a variety of cognitive and emotional changes through the absence of their familiar language, culture, and community. Many newcomers suffered from anxiety over the loss of all things familiar, and experienced varying degrees of culture shock that could cause emotional maladjustment. According to her study, difficulties with language acquisition, and the lack of acceptance by peers, also could both impede the academic performance of a newcomer and become a source of stress. The subsequent adjustments to life in a new country often resulted in an increased risk of trauma or psychosocial problems, school failure, and drug abuse, as well as other delinquent behaviour. James suggested that "the early identification of immigrant children at risk for these

problems can help school personnel and health care providers plan culturally appropriate and effective interventions” (James 1997, 98).

Other researchers also have cited the need for intervention programs in order to curtail the risks associated with newcomer adaptation (Beiser, Shik, and Curyk 1999; Bertrand 1998; James 1997; Steinhauer 1998). Both James and Bertrand have stressed that children “at risk” must be identified early in order to help service providers plan effective interventions that are culturally appropriate to the unique social and emotional needs of newcomer youth. Furthermore, Fralick and Hyndman, in their 1998 study, noted that the support of family, friends, and the community could provide a healthy intervention into negative behaviour by allowing children and adolescents to both develop ethnic resilience and foster strong social networks.

According to the literature, early intervention in the education of children is critical for the successful integration of newcomer youth because the experiences of early childhood tend to define social and behavioural patterns. Bertrand has considered ways to enrich the pre-school experiences of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and has evaluated several initiatives designed to improve their physical, social, and mental health. She concluded that “a child’s socio-economic status, determined by family income, parental occupations, and parental education levels, strongly influences the development of the child” (Bertrand 1998, 8). Bertrand suggested that programs be put in place that would focus on children at increased risk for negative social and emotional development, and noted that it was essential that children identified as “at risk” be provided with tools to improve their chances at successful adaptation.

For those immigrant children and adolescents with psychosocial problems, James made several recommendations aimed at improving the delivery of services to them. Pointing out that these children have unique social and emotional needs, she recommended that course work and in-service training programs be developed in order to equip counselors, nurses, teachers, and health educators with the knowledge and experience to deal with children suffering from migration-linked psychosocial problems. Furthermore, she suggested that culturally-appropriate counseling and social services in schools be developed and made widely accessible. James also proposed that suitable diagnostic and assessment tools tailored to immigrant children and their families be developed, and that a preventative, or early-intervention, program be created in order to identify initial “culture shock” (James 1997, 102). Clearly, there is scope for a Host program for youth to help to address many of the issues identified in this section.

Educational Attainment

The literature examined confirmed that social, economic, and demographic changes taking place in Canadian society have placed a tremendous amount of pressure on the ability of educational systems to respond to the accompanying growth in the diversity of student enrolments, especially in some large urban centres. The public school system in Toronto provides a telling example of such student diversity. Close to half of the students within the jurisdiction of the Toronto District School

Board (TDSB)¹² are from non-English-speaking families, and they represent more than 76 language groups. By 1996, one-third of students attending public schools in Toronto had come from over 170 countries, and 59 per cent of recent arrivals were considered to be “high need.” With such a large number of culturally-diverse youth, there has been a greater demand for services from local boards of education, as well as from settlement and ethno-cultural organizations. Some of the needs identified by researchers include academic support, parental involvement in the education of children, the recognition of the unique circumstances and experiences of newcomer youth, as well as specialized training for teachers, school staff, and settlement workers.

Experience of Immigrant Youth in Education

The literature reviewed revealed various and complex findings with respect to educational achievement among immigrant youth. While some findings suggested there were many barriers to educational achievement for immigrant youth, others revealed that immigrant youth actually performed better than native-born youth and were more likely to move on to post-secondary education. For example, Glick and White have suggested that this divergence of research findings serves to indicate that the adaptation experiences of immigrant and second-generation youth do not follow the same trajectory across all racial and ethnic groups (Glick and White 2004).

In the introduction to *Learning and Sociological Profiles of Canadian High School Students*, Anisef and Bunch (1994) reported that some visible-minority youth may encounter significant challenges in coping with the school system. In some instances, they have been found to perform poorly in class, suffer from behavioural problems, or drop out of school altogether. Some of the principal factors underlying these problems included language issues, socioeconomic background, school policies, discriminatory attitudes of teachers, lack of parental involvement, and, in some cases, an organizational structure within a school such that achievement or success among minority youth was not encouraged (Anisef and Bunch 1994, 8-10; Glick and White 2004). Such an environment has often proven hostile for some immigrant students. It has led to poor attendance, fostered feelings of hostility towards school, and produced an increase in delinquent behaviour. Although many schools now recognize ethno-cultural diversity, and make efforts to prevent discrimination, Anisef and Bunch argued that visible minority youth “will continue to be at risk unless the system as a whole is actively working to accommodate their differences and needs” (Anisef and Bunch 1994, 9).

Several other studies have shown that many immigrant parents migrate to Canada specifically to provide a better life for their children. Unfortunately, because they too often are unable to gain high status and the high-paying positions they thought would come their way, they frequently come to hold higher expectations for their children. These high expectations drive the push for educational success experienced by many immigrant children, and can be a source of stress for them (Glick and White 2004; Dinovitzer, Hagan, and Parker 2003).

Socioeconomic Status and Education

Glick and White have argued that socioeconomic background plays an important and direct role in the academic achievement of immigrants and natives alike, and that substantial differences

¹² In January of 1997, when the City of Toronto and the five other municipalities were amalgamated into one city, the six school boards in Metropolitan Toronto were similarly amalgamated into the Toronto District School Board. Data from “Toronto” across the 1990s, therefore, are not always comparable.

in educational attainment among youths are, in part, due to disparities in socioeconomic status. Group differences in academic performance often have been attributed to differential access to resources, especially financial resources (Glick and White 2004; Dinovitzer, Hagan, and Parker 2003). Anisef and Bunch also noted a high correlation between socioeconomic status and academic performance. According to their study, low-income households often are unable provide an environment that is conducive to learning. Many children in such circumstances consume less nutritional foods, have less access to private space for homework, are less likely to own computers, and have parents with lower educational levels. Students from low-income backgrounds also frequently encounter discriminatory treatment and lower teacher expectations. These elements work together to produce low self-esteem and poor motivation to learn among minority students (Anisef and Bunch 1994, 10).

Lam has argued that the negative employment experiences of parents may have an adverse effect on their children's attitude towards the school system (Lam 1994, 124). The marginalized position of parents may put pressure on youth to drop out of school in order to work and help support their families. According to Lam, such individuals often feel it is more important to enter the labour market and contribute to the family's income than to continue studying. They also may learn from their parents' experiences that educational success cannot provide them with the means to achieve social status in a high-profile occupational category (Lam 1994, 125). Moreover, a study carried out by the Canadian Youth Foundation (CYF) indicated that youth in Canada generally seemed to be losing confidence in the ability of the public school system and post-secondary education to improve their life chances. It reported that many youngsters have serious doubts about both the value of their education and the ability of schools to prepare them for the job market. According to this study, they remain concerned that schools cannot provide either adequate skills or the necessary direction to help them in the transition from school to work (CYF 1995, 20).

Language Barriers and Educational Attainment

Proficiency in languages serves not only as a means to advance in education and, eventually, in employment, but youth bilingualism also can play an important role for the entire immigrant family. In a 2003 study, Orellana, Dorner, and Pulido observed how children use their bicultural and bilingual knowledge to act as "cultural brokers" for their families by gaining access to resources and institutions such as educational, medical, commercial, state/legal, financial/employment, housing/residential, and cultural facilities for their families. Furthermore, Dinovitzer, Hagan, and Parker (2003) argued that there is extensive evidence to show that bilingualism has a positive effect on educational outcomes, and that such bilingualism may buffer the effects of coming from a lower socioeconomic background. Such research has served to underscore that it is essential for newcomer youth to gain proper language skills in order to advance in a new societal environment.

Focus groups held with immigrant youth have revealed that a lack of English language skills made the participants feel withdrawn, fearful, confused, guilty, depressed, isolated, and marginalized. In school, such individuals were unable to communicate with other children, they could not express their feelings properly, and they could not understand the lessons being taught to them (Seat 2003). Often, English-speaking immigrant youth with heavy accents have been placed in ESL classes even though English was their first language, leaving them feeling incompetent and frustrated. While various programs have been created to assist children with their educational progress, such as special education classes and ESL courses, Lam has stressed that the school system needs to clarify its objectives: "Are we concerned primarily with ways to assist immigrant youth to fit in to the existing

educational system or are we concerned with why and how the education system fails to meet their needs?" (Lam 1994,130).

According to some studies, ESL programs may only temporarily deal with limitations to educational progress, and special education classes may only serve to further stigmatize newcomer students in society. There is some Canadian evidence to support this idea. According to focus group participants, ESL teachers were not seen to be flexible, and some even saw ESL programs as something which automatically isolated them from other students, stating that they were not "cool" (Seat 2003).

Discrimination and Education

Lam (1994) has argued that education should be considered to be a liberating force towards the equalization of opportunities in an ethnically-stratified society; however, many studies have found that equal educational opportunities in Canada are limited for some ethnic groups (Anisef and Okihiro 1982; Li 1999). A student's ethno-cultural background and socio-economic status have been identified as important factors influencing his or her educational progress. According to such studies, numerous elements, such as teacher bias, economic inequality, and institutional or systemic discrimination, have been identified as barriers for immigrant youth in the attainment of equal educational opportunities.

Johnson and Peters (1994) have suggested that the diverse needs of Ontario students often have been overlooked. Accordingly, they are convinced that there is a need for a more student-based, participatory, educational program aimed at accommodating diversity and change. Four principal themes were emphasized in their report:

- the need to address and eliminate race, ethnic, gender, and class bias from the school system;
- the need for a fully-integrated educational system to accommodate the diverse needs of all young adult learners;
- the need to build strong linkages between schools and various sectors of the community; and
- the need for greater parental involvement (Johnson and Peters 1994, 441-455).

Another indication of discrimination in the school system is the lack of recognition of foreign credentials. A study conducted by the Canadian Youth Foundation (CYF) focused on the problems experienced by immigrant youth who possessed educational qualifications from outside Canada. According to this study, they faced serious difficulty in getting recognition for their educational qualifications. This report provided insight into the discontent of newcomer youth, and how systemic problems and economic difficulties may prevent individuals from reaching their goals (CYF 1995, 21).

Like Lam, Johnson and Peters have argued that programs such as Heritage Language (HL) and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL), are not sufficient, in and of themselves, to allow newcomer youth to become able to cope with the problems of alienation, which seem to be causing

some immigrant and visible-minority students to perform poorly or even to leave the education system prematurely. Johnson and Peters concluded that the problems facing marginalized youth are rooted in institutional and systemic discrimination. Some understanding of these issues can be gained by examining the literature on Caribbean youth (Rong and Brown 2002). Caribbean youth face pressure in school from their parents, teachers, and peers. Teacher expectations significantly affect the progress of students in school, but in the case of Caribbean students, the expectations often follow a stereotype: having poor language and communication skills; low levels of participation; and, in the case of the males, higher levels of aggression (Anderson and Grant 1987; Foster 1996). Furthermore, Caribbean youth themselves often become confused by decisions about their fate that are made within the Canadian education system. For example, some are quite surprised to learn they have been assessed as not speaking English, and have been placed in an ESL program. Moreover, a disproportionate number seem to be put back several grades beneath their levels of achievement in Caribbean schools and/or assigned to special education classes. The teachers' low expectations of these students, combined with a frequent misunderstanding of their culture, all compound the settlement process for Caribbean youth (Edwards, 1986; Rong and Brown 2002).

According to the literature, Caribbean youth may find themselves failing in school, isolated, and increasingly frustrated. Their parents do not understand their dilemma, and are more likely to blame the children for their educational difficulties. The youth recognize that their teachers expect little from them, and there is little in the curriculum with which they can identify. In addition, the Caribbean way of socializing often is seen as a negative thing. All of these factors contribute to underachievement and a high dropout rate for Caribbean students (Dei, Holmes, Mazzuca, McIssac, and Campbell 1995).

The research also has indicated that Caribbean parents often assume that schools operate the same way in Canada as in the Caribbean. They do not always understand the dilemmas that their children face in school. Caribbean parents are more likely to be concerned with discipline problems in school, and the limited amount of homework assigned. Furthermore, it has been found that they have a high degree of confidence that the school, as an institution, is meeting the needs of their children (James and Brathwaite 1996).

Several studies have pointed to a need for a more proactive approach to the educational needs of newcomer youth. For example, Rong and Brown (2002) have suggested that schools should develop curricula and programs that are more culturally-sensitive, and should design instructional environments wherein the diversity of immigrant children is acknowledged, affirmed, and encouraged. They have argued that teachers must develop empathy for such situations. Furthermore, teachers should support Black immigrant parents' efforts to instill national pride, academic achievement, and a work ethic in their children by emphasizing the importance of schooling. Moreover, they have argued that Black educators can serve as role models and cultural brokers for Black immigrant children.

Anisef and Bunch have argued that the school system must accommodate the growing diversity of the student population and offer curricula and programs that are relevant to their experiences, learning needs, and aspirations (Anisef and Bunch 1994, 7). It is essential that an effort be made to understand the traditions, learning aptitudes, family structures, and moral values of immigrant and refugee youth in order to develop programs designed to meet their educational needs (Lam 1994, 127). Such an approach could provide much needed support to newcomer youth as they attempt to adapt to the new society.

In some instances, newcomer youth have experienced religious tensions in schools. For example, in one study, Somali Muslim youth shared their experiences of trying to get prayer time approved in schools. Unfortunately, many teachers did not support their desire to be able to pray during school time. Youth were sometimes not permitted a prayer room in the school, and, in some cases, they had been penalized by teachers for leaving class to pray. Additionally, different faith practices often were not understood by other youth, for example, fasting during Ramadan. Bullying and violence also proved a concern for some immigrant youth. Moreover, the bullying and violence identified were not restricted to mainstream “Canadian” youth, but included youth from other newcomer groups (Desai and Subramanian 2003).

Social Capital and Educational Achievement

Social capital is a well-acknowledged resource for helping immigrants to cope with their new environment (Rong and Brown 2002). Zhou and Bankston (1996) explored how aspects of an immigrant culture can work as social capital to affect the adaptation experiences of immigrant youth. Their argument was based on a case study of Vietnamese youth in the United States. They asserted that Vietnamese students who possessed a stronger association with traditional values, including a commitment to a work ethic, and who were significantly involved in the ethnic community, tended to perform remarkably well in school. These values were consistent with the expectations of the ethnic community, and reflected a “high level of social integration among Vietnamese youth” (Zhou and Bankston 1996, 821). Zhou and Bankston also reported that some studies of Indo-Chinese refugees (Caplan, Whitmore, and Choy 1989; Gold 1992) have shown that culture, family, and the sense of belonging to an ethnic community have promoted the need for academic attainment and excellence among Indo-Chinese students. Their research and conclusions, and those of others, have served to indicate that ethnic resources, which often are seen as social capital, can provide disadvantaged offspring with an adaptive advantage (Zhou and Bankston 1996, 821; Kilbride, 1999).

Identity and Education

In a recent literature review on newcomer children and youth in Canada, Beiser, Shik, and Curyk (1999) noted that immigrant children of parents who “demonstrate ethnic resilience perform better [in school] than children whose parents assimilate fully.” They reported that researchers have underscored “the respect for education embedded in some cultural traditions, parental ambition and enterprise, and the insecurity over minority status” as important factors contributing to the academic success achieved by some newcomer students (Beiser, Shik, and Curyk 1999). Deyhle also found that students who achieved academic success tended to be those who felt securely embedded in their traditional culture, while those at highest risk for failure in school were those “who [felt] disenfranchised from their own culture and at the same time [experienced] racial conflict” (Deyhle, 1995, 419-420). Moreover, Gibson has written that “minority youth do better in school when they feel strongly anchored in the identities of their families, communities, and peers, and when they feel supported in pursuing a strategy of selective or additive acculturation” (Gibson 1997, 445-446). Cummins (1997) has been similarly concerned with newcomer students’ abilities to negotiate their cultural identities in a new society. He has argued that a more flexible and inclusive framework is needed to account for the variability of academic outcomes, and to more effectively plan educational interventions to prevent school failures.

Parental Expectations and Educational Attainment

As mentioned previously, parental expectation has been found to have a great influence on educational achievement (Glick and White 2004; Dinovitzer, Hagan, and Parker 2003). Furthermore, parental involvement in education has been discovered to be even more important. Students require proper guidance, and having their parents serve on parent associations has been shown to allow immigrant concerns to be addressed at school and school board meetings (Rong and Brown 2002).

Statements in focus groups that were mainly composed of Asian immigrants in Vancouver led Hiebert (1998) to conclude that immigrant families often equated their hopes for the future with the education of their children. The standard of education and the range of educational opportunities for children were cited by many as one of the main reasons for choosing to come to Canada. Hiebert was forced to conclude, however, that “the disjunction between hopes and actual experiences in schooling and employment often meant a fragile sense of the future and of family settlement in Canada” (Hiebert, 1998, 18-19). When questioned about the adjustment of young people to Canadian society, many participants suggested that while immigrant parents struggle in adapting, “[immigrant] children adjust quickly.” Children learn new languages and adapt to cultural expectations more easily than adults, and their locally-attained educational qualifications tended to be more readily accepted by Canadian employers (Hiebert 1998, 15). It is important to note, however, that not all researchers agree that children adapt easily to their new lives in North America.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The problems facing newcomer youth may be more complex than first imagined. More research is needed not only to examine how newcomer youth fare in school, but also to register their views, feelings, and sentiments in order to identify the reasons why visible-minority youth, in particular, often show poor academic performance or drop out of school. An American study by McDonnell and Hill (1993) indicated that older students experienced difficulty adapting because they were unprepared for the level of instruction offered in school. These researchers also pointed out that pressure from family often seemed to force older students out of school in order to find work and provide for the family. A study of newcomer youth on a community college campus in Toronto showed that educational and financial concerns affected the majority of immigrant students, yet the college provided very little assistance in helping students meet those needs (Kilbride and D’Arcangelo 2000). This circumstance is hardly unique to Toronto. McDonnell and Hill, for example, blamed local governments in the United States for not taking seriously their responsibility for the welfare of immigrant students, and for not assisting parents to adjust to economic and civil life (McDonnell and Hill 1993, 85-86).

It is evident from the review of the literature on newcomer youth that academic progress is a significant component of healthy integration. Schools can act as agents of academic and social growth, if they adopt appropriate practices designed to help children at risk. Newcomer youth need academic support, parental and community involvement, and cross-cultural understanding of their unique circumstances and experiences. Many of the researchers cited in this review of the literature were found to have concluded that intervention measures were necessary when unmet challenges arising from the migration and settlement process risk the educational progress of such students.

Like Johnson and Peters, Lam has suggested a number of specific programs to foster a more positive and supportive school environment, and to help facilitate the integration process for

immigrant youth. Overall, such research findings indicated a pressing need for “a more responsive and flexible approach to classroom instruction, to the school as a community institution with open boundaries, and to the diversity of learning needs, backgrounds and expectations in our changing population” (Anisef and Bunch 1994, 13). The recommendations made by Lam and Johnson and Peters appear to consider the importance of accommodating ethno-cultural diversity in the school system, but fail to appreciate the immediate and unique needs of newcomer youth. Such programs may be insufficient, especially if they are based on a belief that poor academic performance and school absenteeism are mainly the result of school-related problems, such as teacher biases, inadequate testing methods, or the lack of a diverse perspective in the curriculum. Anisef, for one, has been concerned that these programs fail to address adequately other factors, such as economic insecurity, unemployment, poor mental health, stress, or depression (Anisef 1998, 279). It is important to note, therefore, that the underlying reasons behind dropping out of school may involve more than those factors that have a direct association with the operation of the school system (Anisef 1998, 286). Anisef has argued that dropping out of school is not a single act, or an event that happens independently of any other factors. It is a process in which different, but interrelated, factors, ranging from the individual and family to school, community, the job market, and government policy, must be seen to be involved (Anisef 1998, 289-303). Treating the matter as a process, rather than an independent event, makes better sense from both a research and a “best practice” perspective, but only if an analysis of all those interrelated factors is made vis-à-vis the aspirations, goals, choices, opportunities, and constraints of the individual actors. A process-analysis approach, therefore, may provide researchers with better analytical tools to examine problems associated with why visible-minority youth from certain ethno-cultural backgrounds perform poorly in school or choose to drop out.

It is essential that more research be conducted on the relationship between educational attainment and the positive adaptation experiences of newcomer youth. The conclusions and recommendations made by most researchers clearly point to the important role played by the school system in promoting settlement and integration. It is apparent that a collaborative and integrative effort must be made in order to meet the needs of newcomer youth most effectively. Again, a Host program aimed specifically at youth could prove to be a highly beneficial initiative.

Access to Employment and Economic Mobility

The literature indicates that the youth unemployment rate in Canada is reaching critical proportions, and the greatest casualties appear to be immigrant adults and the children of immigrants. For example, the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) reported that there are about two million youth between the ages of 15 and 19 living in Canada (CCSD 1998). A high unemployment rate is something that affects all youth living in Canada, but an analysis of statistical data revealed that newcomer youth faced greater obstacles to employment and were far less likely than Canadian-born youth to have had any kind of work experience. Research, in fact, indicates that numerous factors have been working together to inhibit access to employment for newcomer youth. These have been found to include discrimination factors, language deficiencies, family responsibilities, economic insecurity, difficulties with school, and a lack of job-search and job-placement programs. According to the CCSD, “immigrant youth may be at a disadvantage in finding work due to their lack of family contacts in business, their efforts to learn one of Canada’s official languages, their responsibilities at home, or their families’ expectations that they focus solely on

school work” (CCSD 1998, 8). Indeed, the CCSD study discovered that in 1996 there were twice as many immigrant youth between the ages of 17 and 19 with no previous work-related experience as could be found among native-born youth of the same age. According to this study, a correlation could be found between socioeconomic background and access to employment opportunities. Youth from low-income families faced greater challenges in acquiring job experience than did those living in high- or middle-income families. This same pattern held true for immigrant youth compared to Canadian-born youth (CCSD 1998).

The report by the CCSD exposed some of the realities facing newcomer youth when searching for employment. It is obvious that the barriers that adolescents must cross warrant further attention, but the report did not provide enough data on the needs and concerns specific to immigrant youth, such as family expectations, responsibilities at home, or a negative school environment. The study, however, did provide some insight into the impact of variations in work opportunities on the health habits of students, such as alcohol use, smoking, stress, and aggressive behaviour.

Not to be underestimated in importance among some groups of newcomer youth is the role of language with regard to both employment and employability. Thus, in a study conducted by Kasozi (1986), some 60 per cent of the research subjects stated that their accent was an obstacle in terms of both integrating into their new society and finding employment. Furthermore, some 28 per cent claimed they had lost or left their former employment because of language problems.

According to some studies, the ability of newcomer youth to obtain gainful employment can be further hampered by a “lack of meaningful support for these newcomer youth from all angles” (Working for Youth Project). Peera (2000) identified the problem in the following way: parents and community members are busy taking care of their own integration process and are, therefore, often unable to fully support their youth. In addition, their socioeconomic experiences and ethno-cultural background made such youth particularly susceptible to negative influences and discrimination, making it increasingly difficult for them to access resources in order to acquire the level of skills and training needed to compete in the labour market. Based on information gathered from focus groups, Peera also noted that immigrant youth either were not informed of the existence of employment programs, or they did not feel these services would help, or they felt intimidated by them. Furthermore, for those who did access these resources, many did not feel that their needs had been addressed.

In its study *Youth Employment: Canada's Rite of Passage*, the Canadian Youth Foundation (CYF) used focus groups to document the experiences of Canadian youth between the ages of 15 and 29 (CYF 1995). The study sample included disparate groups of middle-class, aboriginal, immigrant, and street youth. The report revealed that most such youth saw themselves as “occupationally challenged despite their best efforts to the contrary ... [and] they characterize themselves as demoralized job seekers with rapidly diminishing expectations” (CYF 1995b, 1 and 7). Many felt dependent on their parents and some expressed frustration because they felt that they had been forced to delay leading independent lives and starting their own families.

Although the CYF's investigation primarily explored the attitudinal trends of middle-class youth, it also provided some information on immigrant youth through comparisons with the other cohorts. Researchers for the CYF have noted that both immigrant and street youth lack the personal networks and support systems to assist them in their search for employment. Middle-class youth have devised individual coping strategies through self-employment and contract work, while immigrant and street youth were found to have been completely reliant on government agencies to prepare them

for the job market. Participants cited the need for more apprenticeships and practica, and claimed that schools did not provide youth with enough information and counseling at ages early enough to move them to the labour market effectively. In the case of immigrant youth, the report showed that the participants felt completely vulnerable to the whims of government policies and regulations (CYF 1995, 34). Furthermore, because so many immigrant participants reported they had no family to turn to, they often relied almost exclusively on counseling services for any help and advice that they received through community organizations (CYF 1995). The study by the CYF did not, however, explore the nature of such counseling in order to assess its efficacy in assisting newcomer and immigrant youth. It did succeed in identifying a set of factors underlying the joblessness of immigrant, aboriginal, and street youth, which included “the lack of socioeconomic opportunities, social and cultural barriers, or an unwillingness to accept low-paying work” (CYF 1995, 34).

Anisef (1998) has investigated the important transition from school to employment as a primary determinant of socioeconomic advancement or stagnation for newcomer youth. He argues that Canadian schools have been failing to prepare adolescents adequately for the job market. His research also warned of the particular vulnerability to marginalization experienced by minority and disadvantaged youth during the transition to adulthood (Anisef 1998, 275). In this research, Anisef examined two intervention programs, Change Your Future (CYF) and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), which were designed to facilitate the transition from school to work for Canadian youth. CYF was created in order to target visible-minority youth considered to be at-risk for dropping out of school, and features individual and group counseling, mentoring, and alternative schooling. The program has been moderately successful in its attempt to understand the transition from school to work as a process that requires support and follow-up (Anisef 1998, 294-296). OYAP is similar to cooperative education. It was designed to help students obtain job placements to ease the school-to-work transition. A student who participates in OYAP is allowed to develop work-related skills and earn wages, class credits, and apprenticeship hours simultaneously. Despite its seemingly well-strategized intentions, Anisef has been critical of OYAP because it has not succeeded in overcoming employers' reluctance to hire at-risk adolescents (Anisef 1998, 297-300).

Johnson and Peters also have considered the correlation between positive employment experiences and the healthy social and economic development of newcomer youth. According to their research, the nature of any employment obtained by such youth can have an impact on their chances for economic mobility. Johnson and Peters, thus, have argued for a strengthened relationship between education and employment, and have stressed the importance of building links between the school and community (Johnson and Peters 1994, 444-45). A community initiative, Community-Based Education for Work, Career, and Life (CWCL), has been presented by them as a useful model because it involves a coordination of efforts among schools, labour, industry, and government. Cooperative education, training and apprenticeship programs, and community mentoring also have been mentioned by the authors as programs that promote learning opportunities for students outside the school (Johnson and Peters 1994, 445).

The existence of a relationship between educational attainment and access to employment has been accepted by most researchers. Johnson and Peters have suggested that schools need to be flexible and adaptable in order to accommodate the unique needs of immigrant youth. It is evident from this review of the literature that newcomer youth need assistance with the transition from school to work. Researchers examining the economic opportunities for immigrant youth clearly point to the need for more flexibility in the system in order to respond to the needs, concerns and experiences

specific to newcomer youth. A properly structured youth Host program could help to foster a smoother transition from school to the work place for newcomer youth.

Social Services

The acclimatization, adaptation, and integration of immigrants together require a significant commitment to assistance from the various organizations serving newcomers. For all intents and purposes, the early stages of acclimatization and adaptation can be referred to as the period of settlement, when newcomers make initial adjustments to life in a new country as they find suitable and affordable housing, learn the language, and search for employment. Integration, however, is a longer-term process that newcomers experience as they endeavor to become full and equal participants in all the various dimensions of society (CCR 1998, 14). A greater proportion of the programs offered by service providers have tended to focus on adult newcomers; nevertheless, it has become increasingly important for these organizations to respond to the needs and concerns of newcomer children and youth as well. Younger immigrants need assistance from every angle in order to adjust successfully, and to become full participants in Canadian economic, social, and political life.

Meneses (1999) has suggested that, in addition to the collective efforts of community agencies, schools, and government departments, an attempt must be made to provide innovative ways to meet newcomer needs and provide services. The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIAR) and the Centre for Studies of Children at Risk (CSCR) described one such method in a 1995 report. According to that report, a west-end Toronto shopping mall was experiencing a decrease in business because of loitering youth and a subsequent increase in criminal activity. In their attempts to address these problems, mall management recognized the challenges confronting these youth. In collaboration with them, as well as their parents, local schools, police, and other community resources, a Youth Services Office was opened in the mall. It provided many services, including culturally-sensitive counseling and community support services to youth and their families. Moreover, the municipal government hired a youth counselor for the Office, and the local board of education offered alternative educational opportunities on site. Like many other studies, this experiment underscored the notion that the first step in helping the transition of youth into their new host society is to ensure that newcomer youth are aware of the services available to them.

Accessing Information

Lack of information is a serious problem for many newcomers. The majority of respondents to a survey in the Halton region, to the west of Toronto, had little or no knowledge about the critical issues that they would have to deal with in their settlement process (Meneses 1999). Other than obtaining an Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) card and making an appointment with a doctor, few knew how to access other health-care services (for example, for mental health, drug and alcohol problems, and nutrition). Respondents to the Halton survey indicated that one of their concerns was the lack of information. It is clear from the literature that it is essential for newcomers to understand more than just how to access services. Respondents in the Halton study indicated a need for information about a multitude of topics, such as Canadian culture, parental roles, the expectations of the education system, and the roles of teachers, as well as acceptable behaviour and mainstream values.

A report by Yau (1995) proposed the development of a Public Information Office in schools in collaboration with community, government, and ethno-cultural groups. Such an office would provide comprehensive packages in a variety of languages which could include legal, health care, housing, and citizenship information, as well as information about the school system, community services, and other pertinent material. In addition, the office could act as a referral service for students and families. It is apparent that a collaborative effort must be made in order to meet the needs of newcomer youth most effectively. The recommendations made by several researchers have alluded to the important role played by the school system in promoting settlement and integration. Given appropriate resources, schools could be used as venues for disseminating information; gaining access to families, and consequently inviting greater participation in their children's education; referring newcomers to services; and assisting mainstream society to become more culturally sensitive to the needs and experiences of newcomers. Of course, providing information about available services is only part of the issue. Ensuring that the services available are meeting the needs of the newcomer youth is another area of concern.

Health Services

The increase in poverty, and the associated need for emergency social support, have come at a time when the voluntary sector has been struggling to maintain its standard of operations in the face of government cutbacks to the social safety net. Several programs have been developed as a response to the needs of children from disadvantaged populations. Research on children and nutrition has indicated that malnutrition can alter intellectual development by interfering with a child's overall health, energy level, rate of motor development, and rate of growth. In October 1998, the Ministry of Education provided a \$500,000 grant to schools in Ottawa's Carleton School Board for programs that would provide students with breakfast before classes. In a short time, the school breakfast program had spread to 38 elementary schools in the Ottawa-Carleton area, partly because of extra funding from organizations and local businesses (Clifford, 1999).

Understanding the Needs of Newcomer Youth

There have been very few research studies or needs assessments targeted specifically to newcomer youth, but those that have been conducted have recognized the value of refugee and immigrant service organizations. The strength of these organizations lies in the potential they have for the adoption of a diversity of approaches to program development, and in their well-established roots in the local community. According to one evaluation, they are committed to cost-effective programs that work, are accountable to the community they serve, and take a holistic approach to meeting the needs of their clients (CCR 1998, 33). Nevertheless, the Canadian Council for Refugees has identified four spheres of settlement and integration where service providers should focus their efforts:

- **economic integration**, which includes acquiring skills, entering the job market, and achieving financial independence;
- **social integration**, which includes establishing social networks and accessing institutions;
- **cultural integration**, which includes adapting various aspects of lifestyle and engaging in efforts to redefine cultural identity; and

- **political integration**, which includes citizenship, voting, and civic participation (CCR 1998, 18, emphasis added).

According to the CCR, it is essential that service providers direct their program delivery to these areas of integration. Newcomer youth need assistance with language acquisition, cultural orientation and acceptance, building community networks, and accessing employment in order to achieve full participation in Canadian society (CCR 1998, 10).

Language Services

It is commonly accepted that the ability to speak and understand the language of the host society is the key to participation in the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres of that society (CCR 1998, 23). Not surprisingly, then, the most prevalent of the services provided to newcomers to Canada is language classes; however, upon completion of such classes, some studies have found that youth typically acquire only a superficial oral fluency (North York Board of Education 1988). This may not be adequate for their academic advancement, or for their social and emotional integration into Canadian society. Several suggestions have been made by researchers to improve services and assist with the integration of newcomer youth. These have included peer mentoring, social groups for youth, after-school recreational and academic-assistance programs, better monitoring of students once they leave ESL classes, better access to services, and greater sensitivity from mainstream society to the needs and experiences of newcomers.

A study entitled *Factors Affecting the Settlement and Adaptation Process of Canadian Adolescent Newcomers 16-19* (Seat 2003) was based on the insights gleaned from focus groups that had been organized to facilitate discussions about issues that youth faced during the settlement process in Canada. The participants in this study revealed that the lack of good English-language skills made them feel withdrawn, fearful, confused, guilty, depressed, isolated, and marginalized. Furthermore, they felt that ESL teachers sometimes were not flexible or were difficult to understand or uninteresting. They also felt that ESL programs automatically separated them from other students in school, and they often were teased as a result.

Another study conducted on supports for immigrant youth in the Waterloo region (CREHS 2002) suggested that immigrant youth would like to see ESL classes developed for concrete subjects in order to make them more interesting and useful. Participants also suggested that ESL classes should be integrated with the rest of the school to bridge the gap between ESL and non-ESL students. Furthermore, it was suggested that there should be summer language camps to further foster language proficiency among newcomer youth.

Community Network Services

Having peer network affiliations, support, and communication among members of the same ethnic group were mentioned as being of great importance to many participants in many of the studies. Youth valued these network affiliations as being one of the most effective ways of getting help in dealing with issues relevant to the settlement, adaptation, and integration process. Trust, support, intimacy, interactive relationships, mutual understanding, positive self-feelings, and feelings of spontaneity with friends from the same culture have been mentioned as the most important factors that fulfill and increase the participants' social needs, security, and self-esteem (Seat 2003).

A study conducted by The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians and the South Asian Women's Centre (Desai and Subramanian 2000) also revealed that the process of adaptation into a new environment can be made easier through interactions with others from a similar cultural background who have been in Canada longer, and might, as a consequence, be well positioned to help newcomers adapt to their new culture and environment more readily. Researchers have suggested that "buddy systems" often can be very effective, especially if new students are paired with other students who can act as cultural brokers, making it easier for the newcomer youth to "fit in" to their new surroundings.

Mental Health Services

Findings from various focus groups have revealed that mental health services are needed in order to help individuals to deal with issues stemming from every aspect of the experiences with the immigration process of newcomer youth. Issues of intergenerational conflicts, as well as the over- or under-involvement by parents in the lives of newcomer youth, can produce tensions within immigrant families, which require specific forms of family counseling (Hamilton 2002; Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie 2002). Moreover, experiences with racism and discrimination can produce low self-esteem and feelings of isolation which might require other forms of counseling. Furthermore, the pre-migration experiences of some refugees who have been exposed to the horrors of war can produce Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which requires specific attention as well (Beiser 1999). Participants in the various focus groups mentioned that while services were in place to deal with problems of mental health, more specialized counseling services were needed which would pay specific attention to the problems faced by immigrant youth (Seat 2003). Also, mental health services must be made more readily available in new ways. While schools and communities are good places for youth to gain access to them, many immigrant youth feel embarrassed, ashamed, or intimidated if they feel forced to make use of them. Thus, providing proper training to sports camp facilitators, or partners in "buddy" systems, might make such forms of counseling less intimidating (Scott 2000).

Employment Services

Key findings of the *Working for Youth Research Project* (Peera 2000) indicated that, although some risk factors for integrating into the labour market originate from the individual backgrounds and experiences of newcomers, such as their socio-economic status, education, parental education, status on arrival, and country of origin, others can be said to be due to personal factors such as fragile self-esteem, learning abilities, motivation, the drive for success, and the ability to set goals. On the other hand, this study also identified institutional factors which better enabled the integration of newcomers into the labour market, such as support mechanisms to address their needs through government, municipal, or community-based programs directly related to employment. Most interestingly, the study looked at the recommendations made by immigrant youth themselves to improve such institutional programs. These included: proper skills training, placement services that emphasized matching youth directly with employers, career counseling, career centres that emphasized comfort in networking and support of parents, recognition of foreign degrees and experience, and mentoring programs. The report made several suggestions for employment services including:

- **Creating a Newcomer Youth Information Network:** The network would have the mandate of working in partnership with community services and settlement agencies, as well as employment services, to identify newcomer youths and their

families, and to support them in accessing present services as well as to create new initiatives to cater to their multiple needs;

- **Integrated Program Following the Youth Development Model:** Based on the model developed by Somerset West Health and Community Services, adopt or adapt the program for youth-at-risk; the model operates in a holistic approach, taking into account that employment needs are related to global health and, thus, addressing all needs of youth by providing life skills, counseling, soft skills, computer training, and a 12-week job placement;
- **Preventative Measures:** There should be services that help youth who have dropped out of school to return to school by providing support for their educational needs. This should involve a serious effort to address issues of discrimination; and
- **Employment Services and Organizations:** There should be more emphasis on proper skills training, placement services that emphasize matching youth directly with employers, career counseling, career centres that emphasize comfort in networking and support of parents, and mentoring programs (Peera 2000: 34).

A study of socio-economic and demographic trends in the Ottawa-Carleton region revealed that the level of education achieved remained a significant barrier to employment and socio-economic advancement (Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton and United-Way/Centraide Ottawa-Carleton 1999, 12). Beiser, Shik, and Curyk (1999) proposed a model for the adoption of an integrated approach to service provision that would relate migration stresses to a variety of outcomes. They emphasized the importance of self-esteem both as a component of well-being and as a predictor of achievement. Other researchers also have noted the importance of supporting the culture and first language of newcomer youth groups in order to facilitate their cognitive development and self-esteem (North York Board of Education 1988; Toronto Board of Education 1997).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The literature reviewed underscored the lack of understanding about the specific needs and cultural backgrounds of newcomer youth. These individuals often have been found to be struggling to reconcile two separate cultural existences as they attempt to adjust to the social norms of the host society, while maintaining their own heritage. They also face linguistic and cultural barriers when accessing services, as well as racism and discrimination in daily life (Spigelblatt, 1999). While much of the existing research on immigrant youth service providers has pointed to the existence of a variety of services to deal with such issues, this literature review has served to underscore the need for the proper settlement of immigrant youth. Many researchers have argued that future services should be planned on the basis of what the youth themselves have proclaimed their needs to be.

To date, the results of the research have suggested that immigrant youth suffer from a variety of emotional and mental-health issues based on their experiences with settlement into their new host society. They identified that language, itself, is not only a barrier for school and work, but that ESL classes themselves can be a barrier to creating social networks outside of their ESL classes. Many have suggested the possibility of integrating ESL further into the regular school system, or creating summer language camps. Moreover, a number of studies have suggested that a “buddy system” would be most effective for making friends, learning English, and understanding the culture.

According to several studies, some newcomer youth also have complained that, aside from language barriers, racism whether overt or subtle, exists in their schools and is a formidable barrier to their advancement. The same was true for finding work. Youth felt strongly that they would benefit from various networking programs, and that job matching, mentoring, or co-op experiences should be a priority in order to overcome the barriers they typically must face as they try to adapt to life in Canada.

Prior to gaining access to the potential services suggested by the immigrant youth, making them aware of the services available should be a major focus for service providers. Schools and community centres have been targeted by several researchers as potential key information hubs which should be utilized for both the promotion and administration of such services. Furthermore, it has been deemed crucial for immigrant youth to become more involved in the provision of social services, as they are the most important source for understanding their own needs.

Finally, a number of recommendations for better facilitating the integration of newcomer youth were expressed by students across a number of studies conducted on first generation immigrant youth. These recommendations centered on the school, and may be summarized as follows:

- some of the immigrant youth indicated that it would be useful for them to have mentoring programs in schools whereby more established immigrant youth could be paired up with newcomers;
- newcomer youth identified the need to have more accurate ways for assessing their knowledge and skill levels. They felt that schools should develop aptitude tests that would be less discriminating;
- newcomer youth identified a need for promotion of both anti-discrimination and greater cultural sensitivity. They felt that cross-cultural training for all members of the school community was necessary;
- some newcomer youth felt that there should be more partnerships between community organizations and schools, expressing the thought that this would allow other youth to better appreciate their cultures and communities;
- newcomer youth identified the need to have better links between parents and schools in that this would allow parents to better understand what is expected of them in the school system, especially if the expectations were different from their previous country;
- some newcomer youth felt that it was important that they be able to practice their faith at school. By having designated prayer areas, it would be less difficult for them to practice their faith, and would reduce some of the stress that they experienced;
- various newcomer youth found it difficult to understand the curriculum because it was too focused on North American content, and recommended greater cultural representation. This, they felt, would improve the 'fit' among diverse groups of youth; and

- some newcomer youth cited the need for more social interaction which would allow them to obtain help with their studies. Homework clubs was one option mentioned that would allow newcomer youth to keep up with their schoolwork while meeting new friends. These youth also identified the need for greater co-op opportunities whereby they could learn more about the Canadian work place, and get job experience at the same time.

Once again, it might be useful to explore the potential for a thoughtfully-developed youth Host program to assist with such needs.

MODELS FOR DELIVERY TO NEWCOMER YOUTH WITHIN HOST AND HOST-LIKE PROGRAMS

In this study, graduate students were asked to examine Host and Host-like programs across Canada, and particularly to identify models or activities that were offered to newcomer youth. The students were asked to chronicle and describe promising practices, and then discuss the benefits and shortcomings of these models, as explained by the representatives of the SPOs they contacted. This collection of Host and Host-like models provided the needed information for generating three ideal-type models. These ideal-type models were based on both a distillation of essential (promising) characteristics identified during the course of this study and on a number of assumptions or insights, some of which had been derived from literature relating to settlement service models, ‘best practices,’ and youth development programs (Kerr, Simard, and Powers 2005; Bendixsen and de Guchteneire 2003; Roth and Brooks-Gunn 2003; George 2002; Canadian Council of Refugees 1998). The following assumptions and insights informed our approach to the development of ideal-type models of service delivery for newcomer children and youth:

- Efforts to develop settlement services for newcomers by service providers often are implemented without consultation with the relevant clients. In selecting models of delivery for newcomer youth, we were informed by studies where newcomer youth voiced their own recommendations;
- A number of characteristics could be singled out in evaluating whether a practice could be judged a best or a good practice. These included: (1) practices that constituted new and creative solutions to common problems; (2) practices that made a difference, producing tangible and positive effects, in this instance on newcomer youth resettlement and integration; (3) practices that had a sustainable effect and contribute to a sustained eradication of issues or problems; and (4) practices that could serve as an inspirational framework for generating policies and initiatives elsewhere. In order to be considered a ‘best practice,’ not all of the above criteria needed to be met. However, without the application of a formal evaluation process, practices only could be deemed to be promising, rather than ‘best.’ Insofar as sustained formal evaluations of youth models have not been employed, none of the recommended models or activities could be characterized as ‘best practices’ at this stage;

- Twelve core values can be said to underlie ‘best practices,’ and these include: access, inclusion, client empowerment, user-defined services, a holistic approach, respect for the individual, cultural sensitivity, community development, collaboration, accountability, orientation towards positive change, and reliability;
- Underlying the development of youth development programs is the philosophy that resilience and competency-building must be central qualities in helping young people make adolescent transitions in healthy ways. For newcomer youth, the challenges provided by migrating to a new country make the goal of achieving these positive outcomes even more important. Exemplary programs increase participants’ exposure to supportive and empowering environments where activities create multiple opportunities for a range of skill-building and horizon-broadening experiences. In examining programs, it was, therefore, important to examine whether: 1) the program goals provided a framework for positive development; 2) the program atmosphere was supportive, empowering, and expecting; and 3) the activities offered by programs led to skill-building and the creation of authentic, or horizon-broadening, opportunities;
- As mentioned previously, the characteristics that distinguish Host from LINC or ISAP relate to social networks and social capital. Two major facets of social capital discussed in the literature relate to the distinction between the ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ forms of social capital, where the former refers to relations among members of families and ethnic groups, and the latter to relations between ethnic groups as well as between immigrants and the native-born. It is our assumption that both forms of social capital are important for the effective resettlement and integration of newcomer children and youth. Thus, research has continued to show that friends and family are crucial to effective resettlement, while effective bridging efforts often result in better social and economic opportunities. Bridging social capital underscores the unique feature of the Host program in that the relationship between newcomer children/youth and volunteers is truly one of ‘give and take,’ rather than a one-way transmission of information and services.

Through the use of criteria suggested by the literature (For example, settlement service models, ‘best practices,’ and youth development programs), research studies that allowed the voices of newcomer youth to be heard, and the information derived from this study of SPOs, three ideal-type models have been formulated. Before discussing the models, a number of caveats or limitations should be noted:

- given the time constraints imposed on this study, not all SPOs offering services to children and youth were able to be included;
- SPOs not funded by Host or Host-like programs also offer services to newcomer youth but, given the scope of the study, their practices or models could not be represented;
- insufficient resources precluded site visits during which the actual operation of different practices or models could be directly observed and questions asked of both hosts and youth clients; and

- insofar as only a minority, or less than a third, of the service providers consulted indicated that they employed outside professionals to evaluate the activities or programs they offered to newcomer children and youth, we can, at best, discuss ‘promising’ practices. Good external evaluations are needed of all SPOs to assess the impact of agency activities on producing the desired social capital outcomes.

There were a number of guidelines that formed the basis for developing the three ideal-type models we will be describing in this paper. These guidelines can be stated as follows:

1. the models had to be ‘needs- based’ and able to respond specifically to the special issues faced by ethnically-diverse newcomer children and youth who immigrate to Canada;
2. the models had to be able to incorporate the unique qualities of the Host program whereby volunteers familiar with Canadian ways help newcomer children and youth to learn about available services and how to benefit from them. At the same time, the volunteers have an opportunity to learn about new cultures, other lands, and different languages, and to engage in making new friends, while strengthening community life;
3. the models generally had to be able to distinguish immigrant children by age or life-course development with respect to achieving desired outcomes, and had to be contingent on the delivery of age-appropriate activities;
4. The models also had to be able to incorporate ‘at-risk’ newcomer children and youth whose life styles might place them outside the normal reach of service providers; and
5. all three models had to be able to build on the importance of social networks or social capital during the process of resettlement by newcomer children and youth. While recognizing that effective integration will depend on the capacity of newcomer children and youth to bridge across ethnic groups and to the wider native Canadian society, both forms of capital - bonding and bridging – play important roles during the process of resettlement;

Furthermore, it was recognized that 1) the detailed implementation of the ideal-type models described in this report will require nation-wide standards, the generation of clear objectives and guidelines for a youth Host Program, and sufficient resources for implementation and maintenance of the model(s)¹³ and 2) that the generation of these models should be viewed as a starting point for discussion among service providers so that information may be shared, and clear expectations developed concerning what can realistically be achieved.

¹³ Specification of these dimensions was not part of the terms of reference for this research project.

A Framework for Developing Ideal-Type Models

In order to develop ideal-type models based on mode of delivery, all Host and Host-like programs were reviewed, and their activities organized by age of newcomer and the ‘matching’ mode employed by service providers in delivering their programs. The results are presented in Table 5. It is possible to conceive of each of the cells of this table as providing the basis for the development of ideal-type models of delivery. A framework for developing ideal-type models, consistent with the guidelines outlined above, will first be developed in this section. Subsequently, we will present three alternative models for consideration, including: (1) a model based on the centrality of schooling; (2) a preventative at-risk model; and (3) a model that targets at-risk newcomer children and youth. These models were gleaned from the sub-reports on Host and Host-like programs that were prepared by members of our research team, and also have been based on prior research conducted by the principal investigator.

One of the sub-reports provided a useful summary of the different strategies for offering the Host program to newcomer children and youth:

It seems that there are generally three scenarios that result in the attempt to provide Host services to youth without consideration for their specific needs. The first is when an SPO does not have adequate resources it may simply resort to using family Host volunteers for newcomer children, youth and adults that are members of the same family. While this strategy seems to work reasonably well for children and adults, it is unlikely to address the needs of youth. In the second scenario, in rural or smaller communities that serve a smaller client base, Host services may need to be collapsed in order to be viable. A secondary problem in this scenario is transportation. Youth may need to be accompanied by a parent simply because they have no other way of getting to the agency. The first and second scenarios may occur simultaneously, compounding the problems of inadequate resources, smaller client base and lack of transportation. One service provider responded to the question of shortcomings in service provision to youth as follows: ‘No direct focus on this specific issue in the current host program model. Absence of specific host youth programs. Limited capacities and resources, especially in the smaller immigration centres.’ The third scenario generally takes place in larger urban settings such as Toronto, where the problem may be more one of finding an adequate number of volunteers to match with the abundance of clients, resulting in long waiting times for clients (Power Analysis 2001, 23), and less flexibility for SPOs regarding matches. Youth Host activities that operate out of schools, however, may address the different barriers experienced by a majority of newcomer youth in larger and smaller communities.¹⁴

We would suggest that both ethnic-specific service-provider agencies, as well as organizations that provide non-ethnic-specific settlement services, in partnership with mainstream organizations (for example, pre-schools, daycares, elementary and secondary schools, and health clinics), could serve as reception centres for newcomer immigrant families. With the help of culturally-sensitive counselors, the specific immediate needs of newcomer children and youth (such

¹⁴ This quotation has been taken from page 181 of Annex 6 in Anisef (2005).

Table 5: Delivery of Host and Host-like Services to Newcomer Children and Youth by Mode of Delivery and Age

| | Individual | Group |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Children (0-13) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESL • Kindergarten Volunteers • Tutoring: Junior Chefs help kids substitute for their parents while the latter are at work • Multicultural daycare centres offer language development, cross cultural understanding, and school readiness preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy Groups deal with personal concerns, debriefing with volunteer counselors (e.g. Art Therapy and Story Telling (PEYO)) • Summer Camps • School Host where students and volunteers help integrate through friendship in a safe and open environment • Conversation Circles where parents and children focus on self improvement/parenting skills development; also development of literacy of young children • Canadian families matched with immigrant families; of particular help to refugee families but useful regarding cultural exchange, support, information, and so on to all immigrant families |
| Youth (14-24) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teen tutoring • Employment assistance with resumés, interview skills, work opportunities to break into the Canadian market • Youth Mentorship-employment placement (e.g. Centre jeunesse arabe/ SITO) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy Groups deals with personal concerns, debriefing with volunteer counselors • Youth Support Groups consist of resident-Canadian and receiving-ethnic immigrant youth who are matched with newcomer youth. Activities embrace a wide range: school, public transport, etiquette, proper dress, ESL, life coaching skills, after-school homework help, summer reading program partnered with volunteers and libraries, PC-skills instruction to provide enabling environment, provision of recreation and sports activities – both home country and Canadian to build cultural exchange and mutual respect, provision of indoor table games such as pool and foosball, intercultural league • Canadian families matched with immigrant families; of particular help to refugee families but useful regarding cultural exchange, support, information, and so on to all immigrant families • Youth buddy systems based on interest, same school or ethnicity with benefits being friendship formation, bridging to other supports and programs, confidence building, language skill development and alleviation of bullying and leadership training for older youth. |

as language proficiency, literacy, therapy to deal with culture shock and traumatic refugee experiences) could be assessed at such facilities. This process would take place in consultation with parent(s) or guardians, and strategies – linked either to individual or group modes of delivery – then could be suggested to the immigrant families. It should be noted that the assignment of newcomer children and youth to either one-on-one and/or group modes requires close attention and sensitivity to the personal needs of each child and the resources available to each service provider. In assessing the needs of newcomer children and youth, we need to be explicitly aware of what the research literature tells us has been found to be important: the specific needs of immigrant children not only vary by age, they also vary in terms of the cultural values endorsed by ethnic groups. Not infrequently, these cultural values also frame the expectations held of male and female children, suggesting that models developed to meet the needs and challenges faced by newcomer children and youth must also be responsive to gender differences. Support for this type of approach also can be found in the responses given by service providers in completing the surveys sent to them in relation to this study. In addition, while SPOs indicated an overlap in the services required by immigrant and refugee children and youth, they also suggested some important distinctions that need to be recognized when developing service models, especially regarding the mode for service provision.

Individual Modes of Service Delivery

It is important that human development factors be taken into account in establishing what sorts of Host activities work best for children of different ages. For pre-school children with special health needs, programs may need to target both mothers and children, where the health of children is monitored with the assistance of nurse practitioners. For very young children experiencing culture shock, individual modes, such as a caregiver approach, may work best for producing cross-cultural understanding, fostering language development, and better preparing children for school. Similar programs within the school system could be offered to children between the ages of 7 and 12. For newcomer youth in their teen years who might be either experiencing academic difficulties in school or encountering problems in finding a job, the development of specific skills is key and, dependent on aptitude, motivation, and personality factors. In such circumstances, the individual mode may prove most effective. This can take the form of tutoring, individual help with resumés, preparation for job interviews, or involvement in mentorship programs. For at-risk children and youth who suffer from low levels of self-esteem and/or self-confidence, or who suffer from culture shock, a close bonding relationship with volunteers of the same ethnic group may prove particularly valuable. This, however, would need to be determined on an individual basis by trained staff in consultation with children, youth, and their parents. Periodic evaluations of activities conducted within the individual mode would need to be performed, involving both the volunteers and the children/youth.

Group Modes of Service Delivery

Once immigrant children and youth enter the Canadian school system, they should automatically become eligible for school host programs. For children/youth who seem to be able to operate well in group contexts or appear to be ready to make the transition from individual to group mode, school host programs that bring together a diverse set of students and volunteers may produce the most positive outcomes. Groups help newcomer children and youth to develop social networks. By becoming involved in such networks, they should be able meet new people, either as volunteers or peers. Given the group context, they would have the opportunity to be ‘selective’ and forge relationships with those persons who are like-minded and responsive to their needs. In this context, newcomer children and youth can learn to befriend Canadians while, at the same time, Canadians can learn and derive gratification from being exposed to different cultures and perspectives. Activities

that are offered would, as is true for the individual mode, be geared to the age of the newcomer. Thus, very young children may participate in recreation group activities, multicultural daycare centres, or summer camps. For both younger and older children and newly arrived youth, friendship circles may provide the best environment for building trust and confidence to eventually bridge to the wider society. For newcomer youth older than seventeen, and immigrant and refugee children who have been in Canada for a longer period of time but still are experiencing issues with their adaptation to Canada, life-skills, employment, and other practical workshops may prove effective in helping them make the transition to either employment or further training and education. Volunteers may lead such workshops in a relatively small and informal group setting, with outside support from a Host coordinator. This activity could prove effective, not only for transitioning to work, school, and other training programs, but also with the enhancement of English- or French-language acquisition by providing additional opportunities for conversation. Information and referral to community services could be discussed during such workshops within an open and secure environment. In addition to Friendship Circles and practical skills workshops, it is possible to envision a broad range of other group modes that could be designed to cater to specific needs including: recreational or hobby groups, skills training and homework clubs, school buddy programs, and youth drop-in centres. The group mode is optimal for the development of social networks for newcomer children and youth and, by doing so, contributing to greater social integration among these newcomers. Attention to the development of such networks, however, should not be considered as an afterthought in planning activities that employ the group mode.

We would like to suggest that the use of individual or group modes of delivery should not be viewed as being mutually exclusive. While many SPOs, in responding to the survey, commented on the positive aspects of group service models, we would argue that the mode of delivery needs to be tailored to the unique needs of children and youth. When young newcomers are traumatized by a sudden move to a new and culturally-distinct environment (or by memories of their experiences in war-torn countries), effective resettlement may first require individual counseling. For these young people, one-on-one mentoring may be preferable to group modes of delivery, in which they may not yet be prepared to participate. After a period of acclimatization, however, they may be prepared and eager to make the transition to school-buddy, friendship-circle, or youth-support groups. The decision about whether to use group or individual methods, however, should be reached by Host program staff in consultation with newcomer children and, when appropriate, their parents. It is expected that, in most cases, a combination of individual and group modes will be the most effective approach to utilize. In a typical scenario, group activities and individual matching would be mutually reinforcing, providing the most promising model for social networking and eventual bridging to the wider community.

An example of one such approach is a Quebec program which funds pilot projects that address issues like dropping out, under-education, and unemployment for youth between the ages of 16 and 30. It does so by developing activities that promote education and job integration through mentoring and coaching services. Mentors may consist of either older members of the ethnic community or tutors of the same age and from the resident society.

Model 1: Based on the Centrality of Schooling

The first and most important institution encountered by most newcomer children and youth upon their arrival in Canada is the school. For very young children, contact will involve either pre-school activities, such as parent-child drop-in centers or elementary schools. For youth who arrive in their teenage years, their first experience will be with secondary schools, and evidence suggests it can be a traumatic one. The research studies that were reviewed for this project served to illustrate that acculturation and adaptation to school life often is most difficult for youth who arrive during their teen years. For these youth, firm friendships formed in their source countries must be placed on hold or severed, making the transition to a radically-different school culture more difficult and demanding. While there are no firm figures on this, it is believed that significant numbers of teenage newcomers do not choose to enroll in schools at all. These youth are not infrequently “at-risk,” and will be considered more directly in the discussion of the proposed third model of service delivery.

While schools can and should play an integral role in the social and academic integration of newcomer children and youth, studies have continued to show that newcomer youth, and particularly visible-minority youth, often experience serious difficulties in adapting. These problems can be traced to language barriers, which often are cited as especially important; the discriminatory attitudes of teachers; school policies; a lack of parental involvement; and school environments that do not support the engagement of minority (immigrant) students. Despite these issues, schools can, and often do, act as agents of positive change. A youth Host model, working in partnership with schools, could infuse schools with positive energies that would be beneficial to both newcomer children/youth and non-immigrant students and staff within the schools. The research studies that we have conducted previously in this area repeatedly have demonstrated the importance of attending to what newcomer youth tell us they need. Among the things most consistently requested by them have been counseling and supports services, welcoming and reception centres, mentoring and peer tutoring programs to prevent isolation and the possibility of dropping out, and assessment services to determine appropriate school placement. Newcomer children/youth have expressed a need for assistance in understanding Canadian culture, and they also want this culture to understand them – not simply with tolerance, but a real open mindedness by school community members. The matching component of the Host program, be it individual or group, is ideal for accomplishing this task. Strategies for ensuring that integration remains as a two-way process of mutual engagement between newcomer and volunteers should, therefore, be given priority.

While newcomer children/youth value the importance of English-language instruction, they sometimes resent such programs as ESL, claiming that they serve to ‘segregate’ or isolate them from other non-immigrant students. Students who speak English with a dialect have been found to feel particularly frustrated with being placed in ESL classes. One promising practice to combat social isolation would involve matching ESL students with students from the larger school population. In such settings, group activities could be provided to enhance social interaction between volunteers and ESL students. Appropriate procedures for placement, monitoring, and assessment of outcomes would be required.

For very young children, ESL kindergarten often proves effective in providing fluency in English. In addition, ESL summer camps geared to newcomer children who have arrived within the year can provide language training and, at the same time, introduce them to the community through the use of field trips to schools, libraries, fire halls, and the like. Other youth host programs could

complement those taking place within the schools. Thus, after-school homework clubs could help youth with their study skills and homework assignments throughout the school year, and do so in partnership with related organizations, such as public libraries and community colleges or universities, which could also provide student tutors. Homework clubs not only offer avenues for bridging to newcomer youth, but also benefit immigrant parents whose lack of education or proficiency in English prevent them from helping their children with homework assignments.

One important example of a youth host model that employs schools as sites of contact and engagement is the Buddy program. Buddy programs are intended to promote positive peer interaction and increase adaptation and eventual integration among newcomer students. In addition, such programs can help resident youth learn about and appreciate newcomer youth from diverse cultures. In them, newcomer children/youth are matched individually or in groups, with individuals or groups from the resident community. The implementation of Buddy programs can be quite flexible. Presently in Ontario, Canadian students are matched with newcomer students in the same school, mostly employing a group mode of delivery. In some cases though, children have been paired by age to ensure that each has a special buddy, but the focus is on group activities, rather than one-to-one conversations. A staff person leads the group activities that accompany the Buddy programs, keeping students focused and helping resolve any conflicts that may arise.

In British Columbia, Buddy programs are typically based in community agencies that have an active, pre-existing youth clientele, and either provide or suggest a wide range of services and programs to newcomer buddies. Newcomer children/youth who participate in Buddy programs, thus, are able to access a wide range of information about Canada, access settlement and broader community services, acquire and improve their English-language facility, and develop cross-cultural friendships and a sense of connectedness with resident volunteers. As a consequence, newcomer children and youth are better able to meet the basic needs of life, and tend to be able to deal more effectively with the impact of resettlement. Activities in Buddy programs often consist of social/recreational activities, life-skills training, and cross-cultural events. These activities allow newcomers to “hang out,” participate in activities, or do their homework in a safe and welcoming environment. Host volunteers who participate in Buddy programs are, as a consequence, better able to understand the needs of immigrant students and the attendant settlement process, gain an understanding and better appreciation of other cultures, develop cross-cultural connections, recognize the benefits of immigration, and gain from their interactions with newcomer students.

Another important area around which Buddy programs can be focused is the ‘lunchtime’ break that takes place in all schools. All youth dread the possibility of eating alone during the lunch break, and this can be particularly troublesome for newcomer youth. Group activities can be employed to match newcomer youth with buddies, providing informal opportunities for exchange and conversation that extend beyond the group format. Such activities will help ensure that newcomer youth are not alone and experiencing feelings of marginalization during the break.

Model 2: A Preventative At-Risk Model

The previous model of service delivery to newcomer children and youth was intended primarily to address the needs and concerns of “available” children and youth; those who are accessible by virtue of being in school or in programs designed for them by community agencies or

service providers. However, there are some newcomer children and youth who remain much harder to reach. Through exposure to *multiple risk factors*, these newcomers often feel especially marginalized and socially excluded. Included here are children/youth who are failing in school or at risk of dropping out of school, and the youth who find it difficult to make effective transitions from school to employment. The challenges faced by these more vulnerable youth often are grounded in socio-economic disadvantages, and include stressors such as lasting trauma, poverty, discrimination, and unemployment.

What stands out (and distinguishes them from the majority of newcomer children and youth who typically have been studied) is the multiplicity and intensity of adversities they have encountered from a very early age. If we were to construct a *recipe for risk* that would incorporate multiple risk factors, this list would include: significant loss of family and friends in migration, family instability and deprivation, English- and/or French-language deficiencies, arbitrary school grade placement, racist and discriminatory experiences while in school, limited employment skills, confinement to unstable low-wage employment, poverty, unstable housing, minimal support networks, limited awareness of support services, and a history of substance abuse (Siemiatycki 2001). The more of these factors that have been experienced by newcomer children/youth, and the greater their intensity, the greater the risk of social exclusion. It is interesting to note that despite suffering from disproportionate disadvantages, research studies have indicated that many of these youth still firmly believe they will eventually overcome such handicaps and realize the Canadian dream (Kilbride and Anisef 2001).

There are, nevertheless, troublesome signs within Canada that the social and economic circumstances for those immigrant families who have recently arrived are changing, and that their social and economic circumstances are relatively worse than in previous decades. For example, researchers at the Canadian Council on Social Development reviewed earning trends over the past twenty-five years and concluded that income inequality among families with children has gotten worse (Ross and Roberts 1999). The authors of this study also reported on a growing body of evidence which indicates that as family income falls, the risks of poor developmental outcomes, in terms of children's health, behavior, learning, and socialization rises. This situation appears particularly troublesome among immigrants in Canada. Picot and Fou (2003) found that poverty rates for immigrants who had been in the country less than five years doubled between 1980 and 1995. Although these levels fell back during the late 1990s (likely due to the changing priorities in immigration policies favoring independent immigrants over refugees and family class immigrants), the rates in 2000 still were higher than in 1980. And, in a report jointly prepared by the United Way of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Council on Social Development (2004), census data were employed to reveal that the proportion of immigrant families living in higher-poverty neighborhoods increased from 48.5 percent in 1981 to 62.4 percent in 2001. These figures clearly show that immigrant families have been experiencing increasing difficulty in becoming economically integrated in their new homeland, and any newcomer children and youth in such a situation are particularly at risk as a consequence.

The recipe for risk described earlier can be seen as a useful tool for the development of service delivery models in two distinct ways. Service providers and researchers are well aware that newcomer children and youth are very diverse, varying by age, gender, location (rural, suburban, urban), immigrant class, refugee status, and socio-economic status. As a consequence, they are known to have many different needs that require fulfillment if they are to acculturate, adapt, and, eventually, integrate into Canadian society. A significant minority of all newcomer children and youth, however, must be considered to be at-risk because of the multiplicity and intensity of the

adversities they have encountered from a very early age. To deal with this effectively, requires the development of preventative programs to early identify those immigrant children and youth who possess multiple risk factors. Such an identification program could be based on the use of a host survey, a version of which is already in use (albeit employed only sporadically), which would contain an inventory of multiple risk factors.

As was suggested in the section dealing with ideal-type models, ethnic-specific service-provider agencies, in partnership with mainstream organizations (for example, pre-schools, daycares, elementary and secondary schools, and health clinics) could serve as reception centres for newcomer immigrant families. Then, with the help of culturally-sensitive counselors, the specific needs of newcomer children and youth (such as language skills, literacy, and therapy to deal with culture shock and traumatic refugee experiences) could be assessed. Part of this assessment would consist in the identification of multiple risk factors. This process should take place in consultation with parent(s) or guardians. If a newcomer child or youth is identified as possessing multiple risk factors, specific procedures should be employed to appropriately match them with specific individual and/or group modes of delivery (in consultation with their families). Naturally, the choice of host matching models would require close scrutiny by counselors, and obviously would be constrained by the resources available to SPOs in the community.

Model 3: Targeting At-Risk Newcomer Children and Youth

The trends described in the previous section also raise a number of questions with regard to the role that a youth Host program could play in enhancing the adaptation of newcomer children and youth who have been exposed to multiple risk factors. At the present time, we know too little about the extent to which current practices reach and help particularly-vulnerable and at-risk groups of newcomer children and youth. We speak here of those activities that have been implemented in different regions of Canada to help newcomer children and youth at risk of dropping out of school, being caught in short-term, dead-end jobs, getting in trouble with the law, or becoming involved in substance abuse. One of the few Canadian studies in this area that attempted to distinguish ordinary newcomer youth from the at-risk youth addressed in this section, provided the following summary of the important differences between these groups:

these are the youth at risk, and they are the ones most likely to slip through the cracks in service, most likely to be doubly misunderstood by virtue of their higher rate of refugee experience, most likely by virtue of their race and newness to Canada to be in the least favorable economic position, the least salubrious housing in the largest cities, and the most fragmented and unstable of the ethnic communities. Here it is that the lack of coordination in efforts to reach youth and minorities and newcomers is the most telling; here the voices of the youth have the most poignant stories as they explain to themselves and to us the marginalization their families and they have experienced – and the rupture of those families by the experience (Kilbride and Anisef 2001, 71).

Several illustrations of programs that assist at-risk newcomer youth were provided by SPOs in response to our survey. One good example is a program in Quebec that attempts to contend with difficulties experienced by vulnerable youth. This program is based on the recognition that some ethnic immigrants and visible minorities are particularly vulnerable in Quebec. High unemployment

rates experienced by some minority groups clearly indicated a need for specific action. Art therapy and other forms of intercultural theatre (as group activities between matched people) have been employed and appear to represent a promising practice in that the therapy has allowed children and youth to turn the situation around, to express themselves, and to develop language and other types of skills. Such group activities may also draw upon skills and talents that youth already possess, permitting them to express themselves through this medium, share these skills and talents with others in the group, and build confidence and self-esteem. Other examples offered by SPOs included immigrant youth outreach programs that offered integration services for immigrant youth, aged 16 to 24, who either were out of school or were experiencing special needs with regard to remaining in school. In addition, we found some examples of programs in which community-based youth participate in youth programs that match youth volunteers, aged 16-24, with at-risk children and youth of younger ages. Such children were referred to these programs by staff in community resources such as schools, social-service agencies, health centres, community groups, and child-protection agencies.

The lack of awareness about information on available social services is a serious problem for all newcomers, and it is especially problematic for newcomer youth who are at-risk. Information about programs that provide opportunities for a ‘second chance’– including returning to school to complete high-school equivalency qualifications, employment-skills programs, mentoring programs, placement services, and counseling programs to resolve lasting traumas, must be made available and publicized so that ‘hard-to-reach,’ at-risk youth can learn of their availability. This will require the development of innovative programs for disseminating relevant information and providing immediate support services that would make use of information that is palatable to newcomer youth at risk. Our literature review did reveal one good example of just such a program – a shopping mall in Toronto in which a Youth Service Office was opened in collaboration with local schools, police, parents, and other community resources, in response to the problems and challenges that could be associated with youth who loitered in the mall. Efforts to reach at-risk youth cannot remain passive. Rather, more aggressive efforts to deliver information and services that will enable newcomer youth to surmount the obstacles that exclude or marginalize them should be pursued.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of our study strongly suggest that a separate Youth Host program would provide an effective response to the present (and future) challenges that are faced by newcomer children and youth. The Host program has, itself, undergone a number of significant changes since its inception in 1985, namely, its extension to government-assisted refugees in 1988, and to all immigrants and refugees in 1991 (CIC 2003). We would argue that the development of separate guidelines and principles for matching services for children and youth should be viewed as the next logical stage in the overall evolution of the Host program. This can best be achieved by drawing on the existing strengths and experiences of SPOs in administering settlement services to these age groups. The greatest challenge in designing a national Youth Host program will be to ensure that it will respond to broad national goals and values, and yet remain sufficiently flexible to meet regional or local demands.

The survey developed specifically for this study indicated that many SPOs currently lack specific guidelines for delivering a Host program to children and youth. Rather, they have developed

matching services for newcomer youth, either as part of the traditional Host or as part of related settlement programs for newcomer youth. As a result, some programs operate according to guidelines and principles designed to respond to the specific needs and challenges encountered by newcomer youth, while others attach themselves to the overall Host program and adapt its guidelines to suit youth. Whether activities are delivered directly through Host and Host-like programs, or as part of related settlement programs, a very substantial number of SPOs across Canada engage in offering activities that are geared towards newcomer children and youth.

It is also important to note that an increasing number of clients of the Host program now can be classified as independent immigrants, while in the initial stages they were primarily refugees. Despite the policy shift favouring independent immigrants, Host continues to play a major role in the settlement of refugees. SPOs that responded to the survey estimated that just under half of the newcomer children and youth that they served were refugees, and an additional 7 per cent were refugee claimants. Given the circumstances surrounding their migration to Canada, a very significant proportion of these immigrant children and youth probably have confronted multiple risk factors in their efforts to adapt to Canadian life. Without question, they would benefit considerably from the implementation of preventative at-risk models for service delivery.

The array of promising practices or activities directed at newcomer children and youth that we located during the course of this study was truly impressive in its scope, diversity, and innovative flair. While these practices are promising, only a minority of SPOs indicated that the scrutiny of such programs extended beyond 'testimonials' or in-house evaluations. We need a greater emphasis on formal external evaluations before it will be possible to translate promising practices into best practices. Through their continued use we should be able to assess the sustained impact of Host and Host-like activities, and whether the unique features of Host (such as social integration through the use of social networks) are producing their intended outcomes.

A great deal of attention has been paid in the last several years to the plight of skilled immigrants who arrive in Canada and find that their qualifications and credentials are not sufficiently recognized. Indeed, the Conference Board of Canada has estimated that the country's economy loses an estimated \$4.1 billion to \$5.9 billion annually due to this lack of recognition (Bloom and Grant 2001). The failure to utilize the talents of immigrants is considered a national waste, and practices already have been introduced and continue to be implemented in order to create a more hospitable climate for the economic integration of newcomers to Canada. And this is as it should be. At the same time, we should not forget the children of immigrants, particularly immigrant children and youth who face multiple at-risk factors when they attempt to acculturate, adapt, and integrate. Their failure to adapt is also a failure for Canadian society, comparable to the lack of success encountered by many highly-skilled immigrants in finding their way into the Canadian labour market. The consequences for newcomer youth who slip between the cracks, be it via low-paying jobs in non-challenging areas of work, substance abuse, early school leaving, or gang activities, are not positive for them or for the larger Canadian society – where the costs can be measured in such things as the loss of talent, or human capital, and the expenditures that become necessary to deal with 'social problems.' A very large proportion of the service providers who responded to our survey were found to offer services to children and youth, but they also indicated that many of these programs were not funded, which serves to underscore a recognition that these services are sorely needed. A much stronger focus on, and acknowledgment of, the needs and challenges currently being faced by newcomer children and youth, therefore, must occur, not only with respect to the Host program, but also more widely. After all, our future depends on our children.

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The Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement - Toronto (CERIS) is one of five Canadian Metropolis centres dedicated to ensuring that scientific expertise contributes to the improvement of migration and diversity policy.

CERIS is a collaboration of Ryerson University, York University, and the University of Toronto, as well as the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, the United Way of Greater Toronto, and the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto.

CERIS wishes to acknowledge receipt of financial grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the data provided by Statistics Canada.

CERIS appreciates the support of the departments and agencies participating in the Metropolis Project:

**Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Citizenship & Immigration Canada
Department of Canadian Heritage
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Status of Women Canada
Statistics Canada
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada
Department of Justice Canada
Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada**

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Launched in 1996, the Metropolis Project strives to improve policies for managing migration and diversity by focusing scholarly attention on critical issues. All project initiatives involve policymakers, researchers, and members of non-governmental organizations.

Metropolis Project goals are to:

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- **Focus academic research on critical policy issues and policy options;**
- **Develop ways to facilitate the use of research in decision-making.**

The Canadian and international components of the Metropolis Project encourage and facilitate communication between interested stakeholders at the annual national and international conferences and at topical workshops, seminars, and roundtables organized by project members.

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