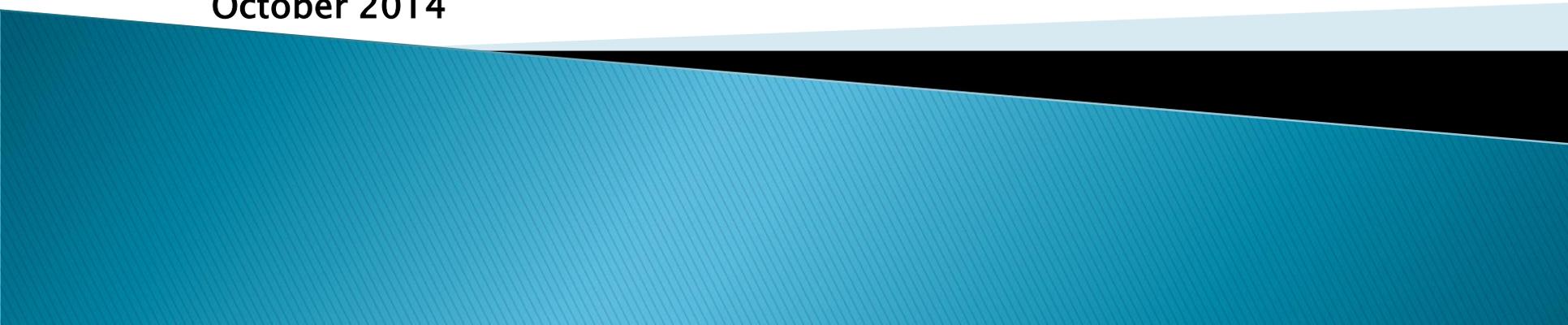


**CAN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
INCREASE THE PERFORMANCE OF IMMIGRANTS'
SETTLEMENT AGENCIES IN ALBERTA?
AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE AVENUES OF
RESEARCH**

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PRESENTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

- ❖ MAIN TRENDS IN IMMIGRATION SECTOR IN WESTERN CANADA
- ❖ KEY CHALLENGES FOR EFFICIENT IMMIGRATION IN WESTERN CANADA
- ❖ WHAT ROLE CAN RESEARCH PLAY IN THIS CONTEXT?
- ❖ POTENTIAL AVENUES OF RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

Background

- In 2008, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney declared that the immigration system was broken. Recent reports also indicate that the Government of Canada (GC) is not satisfied with the performance of the immigration system and has undertaken action to reform the system. (Western Region Working Group , 2014)
- The evidence for dissatisfaction is seen in poor immigrant economic outcomes including low incomes and poverty, as well as social outcomes such as inability to achieve long-term integration and impact on social cohesion (Burstein, 2010).

INTRODUCTION

Background

- The Government of Canada continues efforts to improve the system both from development policies and internal delivery perspectives.
- It is in this context that the Government has begun refitting the immigration system of economic class by projecting to implement the "Entry Express" program. In the same vein, various conferences were held across the country
 - National conference that focuses on the future settlement services for 2020.
 - The Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) 1st Provincial Settlement and Integration Forum was held on April 17, 2013 in Calgary, Alberta.
- All these initiatives and this summit aims to increase the performance of our immigration system by highlighting the challenges and priorities encountered.

MAIN TRENDS IN IMMIGRATION SECTOR IN WESTERN CANADA AND ALBERTA

- ▶ *Demographic and immigration patterns*

It is projected that migratory increase will account for the majority of Canada's population growth. Canada has an anticipated overall immigrant admissions range from 240,000 to 265,000 in 2014 (CIC, 2013 Annual Report to Parliament). When comparing 2012 to 2003, the Western Region has seen large increases in the numbers of family class (19.5%), economic immigrants (102%) and temporary foreign workers (186%). On the other hand, the family class and economic immigrant categories have been in decline in the Ontario Region while the increases in the Eastern Region were much more moderate.

MAIN TRENDS IN IMMIGRATION SECTOR IN WESTERN CANADA AND ALBERTA

- *Economic drivers*

The West is forecasting job growth and labour shortages and will rely increasingly on migrants to fill them. Labour shortages could limit the economy's ability to sustain and grow, and ultimately affect the standard of living for its citizens.

The following studies highlight the situation in few provinces:

- *2010 – 2020 BC is predicting 1 million job openings and 61,500 worker shortages (British Columbia Labour Market Outlook 2010 – 2020).
- *2011– 2021 AB is predicting labour shortages of 96,000 (Alberta's Occupational Demand and Supply Outlook 2011–2021 and Update, January 2014).
- *Saskatchewan is at an economic tipping point. By 2020, it will need an additional 120,000 workers (Saskatchewan's Labour Market Strategy, May 2009).

KEY CHALLENGES FOR EFFICIENT IMMIGRATION IN WESTERN CANADA

- *Growth in Immigration Numbers*
 - Alberta highlighted its significant growth in newcomers over the past decade from 20,000 in 2006 to 36,000 in 2012. This has brought additional funding for newcomers' services and lead to new players in the sector as well as significant growth in settlement and integration agencies (tremendous increase in staff; number of clients has more than doubled) and clients' needs.
 - Large migration to Alberta: the main funding still remains in Ontario and Quebec even though the immigrants had moved to Alberta.
- *Promoting Benefits of Immigration*
 - Beyond obvious economic gains resulting from immigration, there are also social and cultural benefits. We need to do more to promote these benefits to the general public.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR EFFICIENT IMMIGRATION IN WESTERN CANADA

Service Usage

- ▶ Among the one third of newcomers who uses settlement services, 60–75% (depending on provinces) seeks assistance of immigrant serving agencies. Government websites, families and friends were however identified as the most common sources of settlement information access (Western Settlement Outcomes Survey (2013)). Of the different immigrant classes, refugees are much more likely to use settlement services.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR EFFICIENT IMMIGRATION IN WESTERN CANADA

Service Usage

The current situation, with respect to information access by immigrants, indicates the following:

- A high portion of settlement information access through technological means before arrival in Canada (>50%); with a majority looking to government websites.
- The portion accessing settlement services is <50%; most indicate they don't require them.
- Those who access services are getting them from immigrant serving agencies (75%). Lack of awareness and confusion were top reasons for difficulties in accessing services.
- Informal sources of information such as family and friends also very high- on government websites.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR EFFICIENT IMMIGRATION IN WESTERN CANADA

Emerging challenges of Vision 2020 National Conference

- Program Eligibility
 - Temporary Foreign Workers and International Students should be included in CIC funded programs
 - New Canadians with integration difficulties
- Program Evaluation
 - Improved coordination between pre- and post-arrival services
 - Programs should be specifically tailored to each region
- Funding
 - Continued funding for knowledge-sharing, federal representation and building sector-capacity
 - Funding source diversification with social enterprise

KEY CHALLENGES FOR EFFICIENT IMMIGRATION IN WESTERN CANADA

Francophone perspectives

- ▶ Francophone organization in minority situation facing the requirements of the indicators in terms of numbers. Despite their performance, numbers are still lower than those of organizations of the majority. There is a need to consider other indicators such as the contribution to the vitality of minority communities.
- ▶ "The Entry Express " program raises concerns in Francophone minority communities, including those in Alberta . Given that the selection will be provided by employers, the question is how many Francophone immigrants will be chosen by Anglophone employers?

WHAT ROLE CAN RESEARCH PLAY IN THIS CONTEXT?

- ▶ Questioning current practices
- ▶ Generate debate and reflections and suggest solutions
- ▶ Better understand the strengths , weaknesses, best practices and gaps in settlement services for newcomers
- ▶ Vector of innovation

POTENTIAL AVENUES OF RESEARCH

The types of research suggested include:

- The development of program evaluation tools and subsequent, rigorous implementation of these tools. Qualitative analysis of the newcomers' experiences, used to better evaluate the service needs.
- Intervention research to gather information on how to best address barriers encountered by the newcomers.
- Research on service access (i.e. why immigrants are not using services, as participants reported 50% of immigrants to Alberta do not use services.) *It is important to compare those who use settlement services to the ones who do not, from a research perspective.*
- Cost/benefit analysis on collaboration between sectors.

POTENTIAL AVENUES OF RESEARCH

- ▶ What happens to newcomers after 2 –3 years? It would be important to put in place a mechanism of scientific research to be sure that each single client is effectively integrated.
→ Such research will provide information about the integration process, the level of such integration and the impact of services received by the newcomers from the settlement and integration agencies.
- ▶ Among the newcomers, who are the most vulnerable ones, why and what can be done to assist them?

POTENTIAL AVENUES OF RESEARCH

- ▶ Conduct a strong research to demonstrate the evidence of newcomers' contribution to our society prosperity.
- ▶ Evaluate the impacts of the francophone immigrants on the vitality of the francophone communities within Western Canada.
- ▶ Include in the implementation process the "Entry Express " program research to analyze its impact on the Francophone immigration in minority communities.

CONCLUSION

1. There is necessity of constant environment scan to identify research avenue and improve the entire chain of services available to newcomers
2. Regarding its rational nature and its potential for innovation, research should be considered as an important part of settlement and integration services for newcomers .
3. Consider a regional approach of research involving organizations and institutions of Western Canada–common issues in a collaborative perspective; This approach would be valid for Francophone organizations . This could increase funding opportunities because of the potential economies of scale .
4. Provide more funding for research without cutting funding for existing settlement and integration services.

QUESTIONS?

- ❖ Feedback?
- ❖ Comments?
- ❖ Recommendations?

THANK YOU