



Presented at On the Bright Side:  
Rural Canada Works Conference 2010

**“The Opportunities, Challenges &  
Indicators of Becoming  
a  
Welcoming Community”  
Stakeholders’ Perspectives**



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# Introduction



- **Why be Welcoming?**
- **What is a Welcoming Community?**
- **Research Objectives**
- **Methods: Data Collection & Analysis, Sample & Limitations**
- **Findings: Opportunities, Challenges & Indicators**
- **Concluding comments and questions**



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# Why be Welcoming?



- **It is a widely accepted view that immigration settlement can bring tangible economic and social benefits to Canadian communities (Bershiri & He 2009, p.30)**
- **a lack of understanding of newcomer needs at the local level can lead to eventual relocation by newcomers, a not uncommon occurrence in Canada**
- **Rural and small town Manitoba “has had success in recruiting new immigrants, but has lost more immigrants due to migration after initial settlement than it gained during the 2001 to 2006 period” (Bershiri & He, 2009, p. 25)**



# Why be Welcoming?



- **To facilitate newcomer integration and longer term settlement some communities across Canada have adopted a “Welcoming Communities” approach**



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# What is a Welcoming Community?



- **WC definitions focus on the responsibility of the host community**
- **Each WC can be shaped differently according to varying levels of capacities and resources**
- **A WC actively involves both the newcomer and host community**
- **A WC identifies and remove barriers to integration,**



# Research Objectives



**Our three research objectives are as follows:**

- **To examine the indicators of a welcoming community as identified by stakeholders at two forums in Brandon MB, and Ottawa, ON.**
- **To review the opportunities and challenges discussed by stakeholders at two forums in Brandon MB.**
- **To reflect on our findings and consider some areas for further discussion and research.**



# Methods: Data Collection & Analysis



## Data Collection

- “Indicators of a Welcoming Community” survey administered at two events in Brandon & Ottawa
- Discussion group summary notes taken at two events in Brandon

## Data Analysis

- Survey results were tabulated & ranked
- Discussion notes were analyzed manually according to theme
- Discussion note were run through NVivo



# Methods: Sample



Representatives	Collaborating to Create a Welcoming Community, Brandon, MB Nov. 2009	How Could Canadian Communities be More Welcoming, Ottawa, ON Jan. 2010
Local Government	1	2
Provincial Government	4	-
Federal Government	5	4
Service Provider	8	9
University	1	-
Business/Industry	2	-
Self-employed	-	1
Other	8	4
No Response	1	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>



# Method: Limitations



## Some limitations associated with method:

- **Small sample size & limited data**
- **No verification or reliability testing was done for discussion notes**



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# Findings



## Objective 1: Indicators of a WC

### The Brandon Sample:

- Adequate translation services
- Affordable housing
- Educational and training opportunities



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# Findings



## The Ottawa Sample:

- **Appropriate employment opportunities**
- **Adequate housing**
- **Increased acceptance and a civic voice**



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# Findings



## Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

- **Esses et al (2009) found consensus in the WC literature on the importance of the top three characteristics of welcoming communities**
- **Employment opportunities**
- **Social capital**
- **Affordable and suitable housing**



# Findings

## The Top Four Word Frequencies



EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION	CULTURE & DIVERSITY	SERVICE PROVISION	HOUSING
Training – 18	Housing – 15	Community (-ies) – 20	Affordable – 13
Language – 17	Associations/ Organizations – 13	Language – 14	Neighborhood(s) – 13
Information – 15	Service(s) – 7	Needs to be – 9	Community (-ies) – 9
Newcomers – 15	Immigrants – 5	Information – 8	Downtown – 6



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# Findings



## Objective 2: Review of Opportunities and Challenges

### 1. Within the Education and Employment discussion group stakeholders identified:

- **Challenges**

- a lack of language training opportunities
- lack of skill accreditation
- available time on the part of newcomers

- **Opportunities**

- creation of mentorship opportunities
- flexible language programs



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# Findings



## 2. Within the Culture and Diversity discussion group Stakeholders identified:

### Challenges:

- a lack of translation services
- a lack of awareness about newcomer experiences

### Opportunities:

- creation of more volunteer opportunities for the Brandon and newcomer communities
- development of more multicultural events in public spaces that would invite the participation of both communities



# Findings



## 3. Within the Services Provision Discussion Group

### Challenges:

- lack of access to services was identified as a barrier to accessing information
- suggested more language training and translation

### Opportunities:

- To organize more informal and flexible language mentoring programs
- For the community to be aware of the challenges newcomers face



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# Findings



## 4. Within the Housing Discussion Group

### Challenges

- lack of affordable housing
- lack of housing options
- lack of translation services in banks and in real estate companies

### Opportunities

- To consider alternative housing models ie co-ops



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# Conclusions



## Objective 3: Reflections on Findings

To be a Welcoming Community:

- **the expansion of short and long term economic activities for newcomers whether employment or educational :**
- as this was identified frequently throughout this paper as a barrier or challenge to longer term settlement: career development helps with integration
- **flexible language training opportunities and translation services:**
- as these opportunities were identified by both samples as an indicator of a WC, and a challenge to longer term settlement



# Conclusions



- continued efforts to make available, affordable housing for newcomers:
- housing was identified as not only an Indicator of a WC by both samples but lack of housing was considered a challenge to longer-term settlement and retention



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# Conclusions



- **further research should be undertaken:**
- to help determine which strategy offers a practical plan of action to encourage and retain newcomers
- in consultation with immigrant communities about how to retain, empower and encourage newcomers to settle in rural communities on a longer-term basis
- that would include discussions with stakeholders especially immigrant service providers, community leaders, and church leaders



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