

The following paper is considered open to suggestions and feedback.

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# ***Settlement: Considerations for Temporary Foreign Workers in Brandon and Area***

## **Discussion Paper 2**

### ***Acknowledgments:***

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## Introduction and Background

Resulting from discussions with government, community, and industry representatives regarding knowledge gaps related to the impacts and nature of the flow of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) and their families to the area, a dialogue group was formed. The Rural Development Institute (RDI)<sup>1</sup> TFW Dialogue Group represents various perspectives and will serve as a mechanism to better understand the TFW process while also developing a network to promote and assist further related work. An overall vision for the group includes the capacity to choose and discuss related topics and engage guest speakers that will inform policy, programming, planning, and research. An inaugural meeting was hosted by RDI on September 11, 2007 and the meeting's goal was to create a forum that encourages open and dynamic discussion that responds to the need for clarity and direction for community and government stakeholders. The outcome of the first meeting was an established group structure, content focus, and processes for moving forward. A second meeting, which was held on November 8, 2007, focused on clarifying the expectations, roles and perspectives of key stakeholders involved in the temporary foreign worker process. A third meeting, held on January 31, 2008, focused on issues of settlement and sought to clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in ensuring the settlement of TFWs. This paper will use as its starting point the discussions presented at this third dialogue group meeting combined with information gleaned from secondary documents.

As a manner of disseminating knowledge gained from consultations with key stakeholders on the topic of TFWs and insights developed from discussions at the RDI TFW Dialogue group meetings, a series of discussion papers will be produced. Each paper will focus on the topic chosen and discussed at the meetings while also combining the perspectives and knowledge of involved stakeholders with existing data and literature. The intention is to produce literature that is truly discussion-oriented by encouraging stakeholders' feedback throughout the writing process as well as opening the papers to discussion at each of the Dialogue group meetings. While not claiming to be an all-inclusive review of each topic, these papers will represent an attempt to fill in knowledge gaps related to TFWs and rural immigration while also advancing the importance of communication processes amongst those stakeholders in the realms of research, practice, and policy.<sup>2</sup>

The Rural Development Institute's involvement within the field of rural immigration has been relatively recent. In 2005 RDI hosted a rural immigration think tank session, engaging participants from a variety of interest groups both nationally and internationally. Since that time RDI has conducted four Manitoba case studies examining impact and community change associated with the flow of immigrants into rural areas<sup>3</sup>. A series of lessons and knowledge was gleaned through those activities informing future work and policy. Now, in light of the conclusions reached through those case studies and the suggestions to consider each

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<sup>1</sup> RDI is a non-profit research and development organization with a mandate to promote and conduct academic and applied research on rural issues. RDI provides a forum for academia, government, and community through the facilitation of research and activities designed to encourage and promote community involvement. RDI projects are characterized by cooperative and collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders.

<sup>2</sup> Individual names and identifying characteristics will not be mentioned so as to present information in a broad, concise manner, without attributing anything to one particular individual. This paper represents an aggregate of information that provides information on what is happening at the federal, provincial, and community levels, but does not intend to be all-encompassing or authoritative. It is a representation of information learned through a number of different sources, benefiting from collaboration and consultation with involved stakeholders. The information presented here is meant to prove instructive for further research and policy considerations, facilitate collaboration between communities and government and initiate contact and communication amongst involved actors.

<sup>3</sup> All case studies are available online at <http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/publications.asp> under the heading "Rural Immigration".

immigrant experience as unique in its own right, attention has shifted towards TFWs. This group of migrants, while being categorically different from those immigrants studied in the Manitoba Case Studies, pose unique challenges and considerations for receiving rural communities as their temporary status is encouraged to become permanent by way of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). Ultimately the question that remains for rural communities receiving TFWs or economic immigrants is how can stakeholders ensure successful immigrant attraction, settlement and integration in small communities and rural areas?

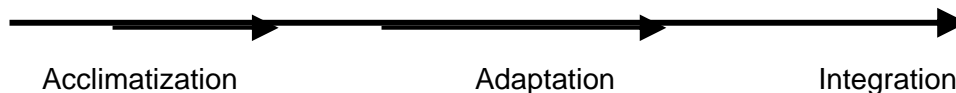
Stakeholders in government, research, and community service provision have expressed a desire to better understand the impacts associated with the flow of TFWs into Brandon, Manitoba and area. Immigration and associated community changes have recently become a topic of local interest with the growth of industries, subsequent labour demands, and labour shortages. Economic growth coupled with labour shortages in low to high skilled jobs and expanding operations at industries such as Maple Leaf Foods has resulted in the need to re-evaluate recruiting and hiring practices, extending employee searches beyond the local, provincial, and national labour pools to other countries. Regulated by the federal government, the Low-Skilled Temporary Foreign Worker program offers an expedited process for recruiting and hiring foreign workers with lower skill levels and on a temporary basis. Also of particular interest to this research project is the fact that in Manitoba TFWs have to opportunity to apply to the PNP, thus contributing to the province's annual immigration targets and dramatically changing the demographics of rural centres. In general, Manitoba's immigration policies and documented success with the PNP make it a unique case in which to study rural immigration and temporary workers.

### What is settlement?

Settlement is not something that is easily defined. It is a process that individuals go through in very unique ways, according to their personal experiences and needs. Settlement is closely linked with integration and both can be seen on a continuum involving a process that includes adjustment (acclimatization), adaptation, and integration (see the following diagram) to a new community and society. Settlement services should be designed to help newcomers through the process of progressing from adjustment to a new society, environment, culture, and language, adaptation to new situations and social networks, and integration into community life, including sustaining a stable livelihood and developing a sense of belonging<sup>4</sup>.

#### The Settlement / Integration Continuum<sup>5</sup>

Settlement



According to the Canadian Council for Refugees, settlement can be understood as

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Lam, et al. 1997. Settlement indicators. *INSCAN 11* (2): 7-9, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Canadian Council for Refugees. 1998. Best settlement practices: Settlement services for refugees and immigrants in Canada. Available online at <http://www.ccrweb.ca/bpfina1.htm>.

*Acclimatization and the early stages of adaptation, when newcomers make the basic adjustments to life in a new country, including finding somewhere to live, beginning to learn the local language, getting a job, and learning to find their way around an unfamiliar society<sup>6</sup>.*

In their training guide for settlement service providers, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) provides the following definition

*Settlement is a long-term, dynamic, two-way process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities. The settlement process can be viewed as a continuum, as newcomers move from acclimatization, to adaptation, to integration<sup>7</sup>.*

According to an immigrant tool box of ideas for successful settlement developed by the National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies, settlement is “the process of receiving and integrating newcomers”, within the notion of creating a welcoming community<sup>8</sup>.

Measuring ‘successful’ settlement is more difficult than defining settlement. There are a number of indicators that could depict successful settlement including economic and/or social integration, but how to measure such intangible concepts proves to be challenging. Plus, the level of success will differ between immigrant statuses as well as the individuals themselves. However, the key to successful settlement is ensuring that newcomers have the necessary skills, knowledge, and information to become fully participating members of a community and society. Ultimately, the process of settlement is complex and varied. According to the literature, the following are some of the most important areas that must be considered and adequately addressed when ensuring full participation of newcomers in a new community:

- Language;
- Access to employment;
- Cultural orientation;
- Recognition of qualifications and experience;
- Address possible racism/discrimination;
- Family reunification;
- Immigration status; and
- Building communities<sup>9</sup>

It is important to acknowledge that settlement involves two key actors – the newcomer and the host community. Both engage in periods of adjustment and adaptation, and it is the responsibility of the community to ensure successful integration by offering resources and opportunities. Settlement and integration can be a long process that requires commitment from the community and individuals. Above all else, settlement and integration must be viewed as a matter of choice on the part of the newcomer. Newcomers must be able to choose their own

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<sup>6</sup> Canadian Council for Refugees. 2000. Canadian national settlement service standards framework. Available online at <http://www.ccrweb.ca/standards.PDF>.

<sup>7</sup> OCASI. 1991. Immigrant settlement counselling: A training guide. Developed by Janis Galway. Toronto. Available online at [http://atwork.settlement.org/sys/atwork\\_library\\_detail.asp?passed\\_lang=EN&doc\\_id=1003494](http://atwork.settlement.org/sys/atwork_library_detail.asp?passed_lang=EN&doc_id=1003494), p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies. (2005). Attracting and retaining immigrants: Tool box of ideas for smaller centres. Available online at <http://integration-net.ca/inet/english/prof/tbo/>, p. 59.

<sup>9</sup> Westman Immigrant Services. 2007. Working with immigrant communities: A guide for service providers. Available online at <http://www.brandon.ca/main.nsf/Pages+By+ID/672> . p. 11-12.

level of participation in a society and it is up to the community to ensure that the newcomer is free of barriers in this decision-making process<sup>10</sup>.

### **Who is responsible for settlement services?**

In Canada, immigration responsibilities are shared between the federal and provincial governments, to varying degrees. Provincial involvement in immigration varies amongst the provinces and “many [provinces] have significant programs and policies geared towards assisting in the integration of newcomers”<sup>11</sup>. The Province of Manitoba recognizes that immigrants need a number of things if they are to contribute to and participate fully in Manitoban communities. This includes:

- Enhanced settlement services;
- Increased English as an Additional Language training programs;
- Labour market integration strategies; and
- Ethnocultural community and anti-racism initiatives<sup>12</sup>.

Municipal governments and communities also have an important role to play in immigration and the identification of settlement needs.

Most commonly, newcomers receive assistance from organizations that specialize in immigrant settlement services. Settlement and immigrant service provider organizations are non-government, but often receive operational and program funding from government sources. Settlement service provision can be a difficult task as newcomers’ needs for different services varies greatly. These organizations face many challenges such as limited funding, overburdened human resources, changing policies and programming, and service delivery gaps or redundancies.

The Canadian Council for Refugees provides a guideline of best practices for settlement service providers, which are organized around the following core values. While it may be difficult for organizations to implement such core values, the list can be seen as an ideal for organizations to strive towards. These twelve core values can assist service providers in developing a framework and standards for service provisions:

- Services should be accessible to all who need them;
- Services must be offered in an inclusive manner, respectful of, and sensitive to, diversity;
- Client empowerment;
- User-defined services;
- Holistic approach which takes account of the complex, multifaceted, interrelated dimensions of settlement and integration;
- Respect for rights and dignity of the individual;
- Culturally sensitive service delivery;
- Services should promote the development of newcomer communities and newcomer participation in the wider community, and develop communities that are welcoming for newcomers;

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<sup>10</sup> Canadian Council for Refugees. 1998. Best settlement practices: Settlement services for refugees and immigrants in Canada. Available online at <http://www.ccrweb.ca/bpfina1.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> Canadian Council for Refugees. 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Benjamin Amoyaw. 2008. Manitoba immigration policy and programs. *INSCAN 21* (3): 6-12.

- Collaboration;
- Accountability to the communities being served;
- Orientation towards promoting positive change in the lives of newcomers and in the capacity of society to offer equal opportunity for all; and
- Reliable, up-to-date information<sup>13</sup>.

Also, to ensure successful settlement and integration and to help newcomers adjust to a new society all classifications of immigrants and refugees have the right to the following services:

- Pre-arrival and port of entry information (including information about Canada and availability of support services);
- Initial intake and welcome (orientation to services, assessment of immediate needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and safety);
- Assessment, information, referral and follow up (identification of other needs, prioritization of needs, development of short-term and long-term plans and implementation strategies, information and referral, follow up and re-assessment of needs, evaluation);
- Orientation (practical, cultural and social);
- Facilitating access to appropriate services;
- Volunteer and peer support services;
- Supportive counselling;
- Specialized services for survivors of torture and trauma;
- Language training;
- Employment counselling and training; and
- Community capacity building<sup>14</sup>.

Informally, newcomers may find that they receive needed settlement services from social networks including family and friends. They may also receive informal assistance from members of the new community, ethnocultural organizations, and other institutions. It is important to recognize that settlement service providers are not the only providers of services in communities. Considering the role of institutions such as schools, housing, and health care in the settlement and integration processes is also part of the whole settlement and integration picture.

### *Welcoming Communities*

Successful settlement is as much about integration as it is about ensuring a welcoming community that positively reacts to newcomers and includes them in community life. A welcoming community respects diversity and members of the community have positive attitudes towards the arrival of newcomers with different languages and cultures. Anti-racism initiatives and cultural diversity celebrations are critical components of a welcoming community and, hopefully, successful settlement and integration. Newcomers must not feel threatened or excluded in their new community and efforts must be taken to ensure a hospitable environment. The National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies' document outlines seven key factors in ensuring a hospitable community for newcomers:

- Respect diversity;
- Ensure accessible public services;

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<sup>13</sup> Canadian Council for Refugees. 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Canadian Council for Refugees. 2000. p. 16-18.

- Ensure a range of educational opportunities;
- Promote health and wellness for all;
- Safety;
- Invite newcomers to share leisure-time activities; and
- Acknowledge faith and spirituality<sup>15</sup>.

A good example of a community that has taken extra efforts to ensure that is welcoming and inclusive is Sherbrooke, Quebec. The community has developed and implemented forward-looking, proactive planning and policy at the municipal level to ensure retention and inclusion of newcomers. With consultations and input from community members and immigrants, the City of Sherbrooke developed a municipal policy on welcoming and integrating immigrants to manage ethnocultural diversity<sup>16</sup>.

### **Settlement and Temporary Foreign Workers**

The basic settlement needs (those that are required for day-to-day living) for TFWs are not much different than for other newcomers. Such needs include the basic. Initially upon arrival TFWs need housing, language and support services, transportation, and health care. After receiving PN status and as family reunification occurs, those needs continue and increase to include education and childcare. In Manitoba, TFWs are eligible for a number of other services including:

- Manitoba Health Insurance;
- Employment Insurance (eligible after working for one-year in Canada, with SIN number and insurable earnings in the previous year [at least 910 hours] );
- Canada Pension Plan (eligible if they have contributed to CPP and have valid employment earnings);
- Canada Child Tax Benefit (eligible if they have lived in Canada for a previous 18 months and have a valid work permit);
- Child Related Income Support Program (eligible if they have a valid Manitoba Health Registration number and receiving Child Tax Benefit); and
- Healthy Baby Prenatal Benefit (eligible with a valid Manitoba Health Number)<sup>17</sup>.

Confusion often amounts around responsibility for TFWs since they are considered temporary until they receive Provincial Nominee status (PN). While their status is temporary in nature, most of the needs of TFWs fall under the responsibility of the employer. In most cases, immigrant service provider organizations are not mandated or funded to provide services to TFWs. While the employer may provide some services to TFWs, service gaps exist. Little is known about who is or should be providing services for TFWs<sup>18</sup>. In rural areas that receive TFWs, even less opportunities exist for service provision as service provider organizations are limited or non-existent and established ethnocultural communities are few. Combined with a temporary status, TFWs arriving in rural areas can face extreme isolation and exclusion from the community, especially from service provision strategies and programs.

<sup>15</sup> National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies. 2005. Attracting and retaining immigrations: Tool box of ideas for smaller centres. Available online at <http://integration-net.ca/inet/english/prof/tbo/>. p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> Anne-Marie Corriveau and Jean-Yves La Rougery. 2006. Welcoming and integrating immigrants: Sherbrooke's experience. *Our Diverse Cities*, 2. 102- 105.

<sup>17</sup> Westman Immigrant Services, p. 42-51.

<sup>18</sup> Nickela Anderson. 2007. Finding a home in the global economy: Temporary foreign workers in Alberta. *WLN temporary foreign workers symposium report*. The Work and Learning Network for Research and Policy – University of Alberta. 1-14.



Much literature states that one of the primary factors of successful settlement is employment, and, in fact, if newcomers can integrate economically then this will lead to easier social and cultural integration. In the case of TFWs, employment is a precondition of their arrival to a community and they do not have to go through the arduous process of seeking employment upon arrival to Canada. Also, as outlined in the federal government's Low-Skilled Temporary Foreign Worker Program, employers must ensure that a number of key settlement needs are addressed prior to the arrival of TFWs arrival – this includes ensuring the presence of adequate, affordable housing. In some cases, employers may also assist in the provision of transportation, health care, language classes, and other immediate settlement needs. So, in this sense, the settlement needs of TFWs are quite different from those of newcomers coming to Canada via other immigration streams.

In Manitoba, the PNP is actively pursued and promoted by the Provincial government. TFWs have the opportunity to apply to the PNP after six months of working in Manitoba, which is an option that is communicated to TFWs prior to their arrival in Canada. If TFWs receive PN status and if they remain with the same employer, one of the most important factors for settlement is already addressed - employment. However, their previous temporary status and the uncertainty of receiving PN status may have impacts on other aspects of settlement and it is not known whether TFWs progress through the same settlement continuum as other immigrants. They will go through a process of adjustment and acclimatization upon their arrival, and this may continue on to adaptation, but integration may be challenging. TFWs do not have their families with them, their status beyond the two-year work permit is never completely ensured until they receive PN status, and their choices are rather limited as their work permit requires them to work for one employer. TFWs' conditions in Canada are precarious, unsettled, and temporary until they receive a more permanent status of immigration. Upon receiving PN status, TFWs do have an advantage over other immigrants as they have lived and worked in Manitoba for up to two years, received much information through initial orientation sessions and from their time in the community, and presumably developed social networks and relationships. More research needs to be undertaken to better understand how TFWs progress through 'typical' settlement and integration patterns as well as the different needs they may have because of their initial temporary status.

## **Reflections on Settlement of Temporary Foreign Workers in Brandon**

### *Maple Leaf Foods*

Maple Leaf Foods (MLF) is the key contributor to the influx of newcomers in Brandon. Since 2002, the plant has undergone large scale international recruitment efforts to address labour shortages. MLF will be increasing their labour force to implement a full second kill and cut shift in June 2008. With the second shift in operation, the processing capacity of the plant will increase from 50,000 hogs per week to more than 86,000 per week. By the end of 2009 the Brandon plant will have the capacity to process 4.3 million hogs annually. The increase in productivity requires an increase in labour and continued recruitment from overseas will address such shortages.

Currently there are more than 1700 employees at the MLF Brandon plant. Of that, 60% of employees are international recruits and 300 are Aboriginal<sup>19</sup>. At present there are 939 international recruits employed at the Brandon MLF plant, which, when compared to the number

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<sup>19</sup> Susan Boeve and Robert Annis. 2008.

recruited (1050), indicates an 89% retention rate since 2002. It is estimated that more than half of the TFW population has been approved for PN status, while the other half is in the process of applying.

Upon receiving PN status, TFWs can initiate family reunification. More than 2100 family member arrivals are anticipated in Brandon over the next year as applications for PN status are approved<sup>20</sup>. It is estimated that approximately 3,953 family members (children and spouses) will arrive in Brandon by 2011. In light of these estimates and as a result of the hiring of TFWs and family reunification, the City of Brandon can anticipate 5,692 new residents by 2011. This addition represents nearly 14% of Brandon's current total population (41,511)<sup>21</sup>.

In Brandon, MLF staffing procedures occur within three streams: 1) domestic; 2) international; and 3) salaried. To meet the company's labour needs, both domestic and international recruitment efforts are on-going. The first group of international recruits arrived to Brandon from Mexico in 2002. Since then workers have been recruited from El Salvador, Ukraine, China, Colombia, and Mauritius. It is estimated that over time there may be less need to use international labour pools to meet company needs as the current MLF staffing model encompasses changing corporate needs and attrition. By 2012, it is expected that MLF will only need to recruit approximately 100 TFWs per year as opposed to the hundreds that are currently required to meet expansion demands.

Settlement is an issue taken seriously by MLF and it is in their best interest to ensure that TFWs have their needs met. Prior to arrival in Canada, MLF ensures the following pre-arrival settlement and orientation procedures:

- Transportation arrangements from the airport to Brandon;
- Affordable and appropriate accommodations; and
- Housing and settlement packages (rental damage deposit; first month rent; bed and linens; groceries; cash; weather appropriate clothing).

The arrival procedure is standardized for all new groups of TFWs. This procedure has new TFWs arriving to Winnipeg International Airport on a Wednesday, where they spend their first 2 nights in a hotel and apply for social insurance numbers and Manitoba Health numbers. Following that, they sign their lease agreement and then take part in a daily living orientation session.

Acknowledging that settlement involves both the newcomer and the community, MLF has made efforts to involve the community in the process. To aid the settlement process and increase communication in the community, six MLF employees are assigned roles as Community Steering Committee (CSC) liaisons. Each liaison serves as a bridge between the company and the community and represents one of the six settlement priorities, as determined by MLF:

- Housing CSC representative procures housing for new recruits prior to their arrival in Brandon;
- Education CSC representative assists with the pre-registration of anticipated arrival of family members and assists in 'school readiness';
- Health care CSC representative communicates existing and anticipated demographics of international recruits with local health service providers;

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<sup>20</sup> Economic Development Brandon, May 29, 2007

<sup>21</sup> January 2008 Stakeholder Update

- Transportation CSC representative has successfully worked with the City of Brandon to incorporate appropriate changes to public transportation routes and times to accommodate MLF employees and MLF shifts;
- Childcare CSC representative is working to broadly communicate the need for local 'philanthropic social responsibility' to meet childcare needs; and
- Language and support service CSC representative is assigned the task of helping communicate with service providers and work to increase community preparedness.

In addition, MLF Brandon employs two Human Resource Generalists, of which one is fluent in Spanish and English, while the other is fluent in Mandarin. Also, there is a Human Resource Coordinator to assist TFWs with the paperwork they may encounter. The plant has a settlement team located in Brandon that assists newcomers' with pre- and post-arrival needs.

When developing settlement packages, MLF considers the country of origin for each group of TFWs. Part of the orientation training includes teaching respect for cultural diversity in the workplace. Both domestic and international MLF workers are required to attend diversity training. MLF assists TFWs in applying for and securing PN status, which also initiates the process of family reunification. Salaried and leadership staff members are required to take part in additional intensified respect and diversity training. Both domestic and international staff members go through similar orientation processes; however, international workers receive orientation that includes daily living and adjustment/requirements of working in Canada.

MLF's measure of successful TFW settlement primarily includes obtaining the plant's necessary labour force and getting the new recruits into Canada. Ultimate success from MLF's perspective is having TFWs integrate into Brandon and their workplace as well as remaining at MLF after gaining PN and permanent residency status. Retention beyond three years currently constitutes success; anything beyond that period is viewed as a bonus. Family reunification is also viewed as a key component of success, if that is the goal of the individual. For MLF, success also constitutes reaching the company's target demographic for employees, which include young workers with young families. Younger workers will have a greater possibility of a lengthy career with MLF and have strong potential to transition into leadership roles.

### *Westman Immigrant Services*

Westman Immigrant Services (WIS) is Brandon's sole immigrant service provider organization. The organization was traditionally mandated and funded to provide services to immigrants with permanent residency status, either federally or through the PNP. Through recent policy changes, WIS is now able to provide all available services to TFWs, except for EAL classes and employment counseling. Recent policy and program changes have been influenced by the need to support newcomers outside of typical immigration streams. The influx of TFWs in Brandon has caused new challenges for the organization as the increased demands on their resources has stretched services beyond capacity. Currently there are six employees at WIS – two of which are settlement workers. The Province of Manitoba has expressed an intention to increase the staff and capacity of the organization, but limitations owing to spatial constraints are being considered. WIS is considered to be a hub of initial contact for newcomers.

WIS settlement workers typically become more involved with TFWs upon receipt of their PN status and during the process of family reunification. A key WIS objective is to ensure that newcomers' needs are being sufficiently and appropriately met as they begin their new lives in Canada. An important function of the organization is to ensure that newcomers have a clear understanding of what rights and options they are entitled to. WIS provides information about

basic services such as food, clothing, housing and basic documentation to function within a new society. Also, the organization provides EAL classes for new immigrants, with the exception of TFWs prior to their receipt of PN status. More specifically, WIS ensures that newcomers have information regarding the following:

- School registrations;
- Day care;
- Finding and consulting with a family doctor and dentist;
- Child tax benefits;
- GST;
- Family allowance;
- Banking;
- Brandon in general;
- Local transportation; and
- Community services.

From WIS's perspective, settlement success equals diversity and cultural respect, accepting and celebrating both original and Canadian cultures. A key factor in successful settlement and integration is supporting newcomers as they move along their career paths and obtain English language skills, which are critical for employment success. Coordinating services, increasing communication amongst stakeholders, and creating an important point of access are viewed as key indicators of success for the organization as they assist newcomers.

### *City of Brandon*

Immigration and accommodating new arrivals to Brandon has received, and will continue to receive, City attention and resources. The City's role in this process is primarily viewed as a facilitating body, ensuring communication amongst stakeholders, and bridging gaps between businesses, service providers, and community. A common goal across stakeholders and involved parties is to plan proactively.

Part of the City's role in the TFW process is to assist with the issuance of a Labour Market Opinion (LMO)<sup>22</sup>, sharing with Human Resources and Social Development Canada/Service Canada what labour pool is available locally. Also, the City supports the needs of local industry when deemed necessary. Communication is part of the City's role in educating and identifying changing needs in the community and the economy. Historically, demographics and labour needs have been fairly static in Brandon and an existing concern is that recent changes and local needs will be viewed as an anomaly. The reality is that Brandon's composition and needs have changed and will likely continue to evolve over time. Effective communication and education are crucial when fostering awareness and enhancing the experience of locals and newcomers through periods of transition.

When MLF began recruiting TFWs to the Brandon plant, the City played a more active role in compiling a local settlement package. The City viewed this as an opportunity to work together to foster change in the local service delivery model for immigrants and migrants in Brandon. The City continues to advocate for increased local settlement resources.

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<sup>22</sup> A labour market opinion (LMO) is a positive or negative opinion provided by Human Resources and Social Development Canada/Service Canada on the likely impact that hiring TFWs may have on the Canadian labour market.

It is in the City's interest to support the settlement process of TFWs and their families into Brandon. Success is seen as local growth in industry and social services. Local success entails retaining new families in southwestern Manitoba, even if they do not continue to remain employed by MLF. Re-emphasizing the need for the City to remain a neutral stakeholder in the process, nurturing a balanced approach to growth, development and associated needs is of utmost importance. Fostering social cohesion through local and provincial government programming is critical.

Also, community diversity is viewed as a factor of success. Community 'readiness' will play a role in the acceptance and respect of such diversity. To ensure a welcoming community, the City is working on developing a strategic cultural plan to be presented to council. Local strategies to welcome newcomers, assistances in settlement processes, and resolving possible conflict are important factors when ensuring that newcomers remain in Brandon. The concern is that after a period of time, if Brandon is not successful in planning and accommodating needs, newcomers will move to Winnipeg or elsewhere. It is possible that in the future a local immigration office may be established; currently immigration is handled through the Economic Development office.

### *Manitoba Labour and Immigration*

Aggressive provincial immigration targets have identified doubling current immigration numbers to 20,000 immigrants per year by 2017. In 2007, Manitoba surpassed an immigration target of 10,000, receiving 11,500 immigrants. To reach the newly set provincial targets, numbers will have to increase by an additional 1000 immigrants per year for the next decade. In this effort to increase immigration numbers, part of Manitoba Labour and Immigration's (LIM) mandate is to facilitate post-arrival success of newcomers through supporting local service delivery.

In 1998, Manitoba, along with British Columbia and Quebec, initially accepted responsibility for selecting and settling immigrants from the federal government. This arrangement was renewed in 2002. Since then other provinces have moved towards a similar arrangement with the federal government. Manitoba's arrangement is viewed as unique and positive because the provincial government is seen to be more closely involved and aligned with residents and newcomers, enabling service delivery to occur in a more customized way through local decision making. In the Province of Manitoba, currently there are about 15 - 17 million dollars allocated for programming to facilitate the settlement process. The Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program (MIIP) delegates full responsibility to the Province for settlement and adult language training. The core MIIP program goal is to "facilitate the economic and social integration of immigrants to Manitoba"<sup>23</sup>.

As the provincial government department responsible for immigration, LIM has provincial program officers that are actively engaged in the development and implementation of settlement services. LIM's guiding principles for settlement services include:

- Developing common service delivery standards;
- Specializing services;
- Minimizing duplication of services;
- Fostering input from newcomers to develop new programming;
- Increasing communication among all stakeholders;

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<sup>23</sup> Manitoba Labour and Immigration. <http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/eal/funding.html>

- Establishing partnerships and best practices among all stakeholders, including all levels of government;
- Avoiding replication of services that already exist for Manitobans;
- Facilitating newcomer's access to provincial services;
- Remaining non-ethno specific;
- Fostering independence; and
- Facilitating a collaborative model among agencies.

LIM's settlement strategy model includes the following settlement priorities and is illustrated in Appendix 1:

- Provision of pre-arrival information;
- Centralization of initial information and orientation;
- Centralization of assessments and referral;
- Settlement and community supports;
- Employment supports;
- Qualification recognition supports; and
- Creation of specialized programming<sup>24</sup>.

All components of the LIM settlement model have existed in some capacity, but over the next two years efforts will be made to enhance and fine-tune immigration settlement strategies. Efforts will be made to learn from Winnipeg's experiences with receiving and settling newcomers. Currently in Winnipeg, there is centralized programming that consists of a four week, half a day orientation program assisting newcomers in understanding the options, laws and customs that are part of their new society. The hope exists that in the future similar programming will be available outside of Winnipeg.

Effective communication is a critical component of settlement processes. It is important to ensure that needs are being sufficiently met and that duplication of services is avoided. Provincial programming hinges on local and community efforts to ensure success through communication, partnerships and engagements. The Province's role is viewed as a facilitator; however, through the process of establishing the system there is a need for the Province to be directly involved in the settlement process. It is in all stakeholders' best interests to encourage and support community capacity building to develop and deliver services locally.

Language training continues to be a key objective in the settlement and integration process. The potential to build on neighborhood programming to deliver language services is being explored; this is viewed as especially important in a large urban centre where historically all programming has occurred in the core. Efforts will be made to build on existing networks to foster community development in neighborhoods, connecting people and place. The Province is exploring the possibility of developing English at work training programs, encouraging employers to incorporate language instruction to improve workplace efficacy.

Traditionally TFWs have not been eligible for all settlement services. TFWs are eligible for EAL in the workplace, a co-funded program with employers. TFWs are eligible for other services when needed; however, it is recognized that if services are wide open to TFWs the system may become quickly overloaded with demand. It is therefore necessary to work together to develop a model that works for all stakeholders and newcomers. A continuum of responsibility will enhance awareness that the evolution of needs and responsibility is by design.

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<sup>24</sup> Manitoba Labour and Immigration. <http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/partners/settlement/>

From a provincial perspective, successful settlement entails social and economic integration into Manitoban society. Success is evident when newcomers are gainfully employed, contributing and participating in communities. Assisting rural communities in retaining newcomers is a common goal; however, retention within Manitoba is considered success. Provincial regionalization policy reflects the initial goal of supporting communities in their pursuit to attract and retain immigrants, but movement to urban centres and retention within Manitoba is favorably viewed. It should be noted that the opposite phenomenon of newcomers migrating from urban to rural settings is being observed and this is also favorably viewed.

### **Settlement Concerns and Challenges for TFWs and their families in Brandon**

Despite MLF Brandon's six years of experience with international recruitment and their standardized pre-arrival and settlement processes, there are still many challenges regarding successful settlement and integration of newcomers. Other, less anticipated challenges are expected to become evident throughout the coming months as large numbers of family members arrive to the community. Family members will have very different needs and types of social engagement in the community, with emphasis placed on services within the school and day-care systems. For example, it is estimated that there will be more than 1300 children arriving in Brandon through family reunification. These children will require some form of day care while their parents work. Securing daycare in Brandon can be challenging and will likely become more problematic with an influx of young families. Similarly, it is essential to ensure that the Brandon School Division has adequate information to prepare for additional children in classrooms and these new children may have special requirements such as English language support. There are currently 7700 children in the Brandon School Division and it is estimated that there are approximately 1000 available seats at this time. Therefore, the physical infrastructure for additional students may exist, but it will be necessary to ensure that there are enough staff members to support an influx of new arrivals.

A serious concern and challenge of settling TFWs and their families is possible family breakdown because of long periods of separation. Family reunification is a goal of TFWs as they arrive in Brandon; however, two years is a long time to be separated from one's spouse and children and this may have a negative impact on family members as they begin to reunite and relocate to Canada. In some instances, when families are reunited they no longer function as a single-family unit. In cases of family breakdown, WIS has provided assistance to spouses so they are able to provide food, apply for social assistance and child support, and seek legal aid. This reality requires further attention as it puts primarily women and children at risk of poverty, social isolation, and possibly homelessness. An increased understanding of family reunification, associated needs, and challenges is timely and necessary.

An important, and potentially crippling, barrier to social service provision and access is that of language. While TFWs receive some EAL support through their employer, their families do not have the same language learning opportunities. Simply making an appointment with a doctor or banker through a translator can be fraught with difficulty and miscommunication.

The concerns and challenges of settlement workers and immigrant service provider organizations must also be considered and acknowledged. Their caseloads are large and existing resources are often stretched beyond capacity. In many cases, settlement workers act as translators and thus the responsibility and trust placed upon them, when they already have large caseloads, can be very overwhelming. The needs of newcomers extend beyond access to tangible services and emotional needs bond the newcomer and settlement worker into a close

relationship of trust and responsibility. This is an important relationship for newcomers, but can contribute to feelings of stress for settlement workers.

It is critical that stakeholders work together in partnership to create and deliver a community orientation and settlement strategy. Knowledge about the numbers of individuals and families arriving in Brandon and subsequent needs must be communicated. Through teamwork and cooperation, information sharing and group programming will assist in service delivery. A current example of this in Brandon is the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Health Access Centre that works with WIS to co-facilitate and assist service delivery. Ensuring collaboration, communication, and awareness amongst involved stakeholders is crucial when attempting to address the challenges of settling and integrating newcomers. A welcoming community that works together to make newcomers feel comfortable and encourages them to take part in community life will experience the benefits of population and economic growth, and increased diversity.

### **Areas for Further Dialogue and/or Research**

Since many of the TFWs that are recruited to work at the MLF plant in Brandon have been informed of the opportunity to apply to the PNP and become permanent immigrants, their thoughts and plans for permanency and settlement may be similar to those who arrive as Provincial Nominees or under the Federal Economic Class. While the status of their work permit is temporary, many of these international workers do not feel themselves to be temporarily in Canada. Since temporary workers in Brandon do not see themselves as temporary, and since both the community and MLF encourage and support their application to the PNP, it may be safe to say that the settlement needs and priorities of TFWs are similar to those who arrive with a more permanent status. However, a question that requires further research and exploration is how those settlement needs and priorities may differ between those who come through the TFW program, those that utilize the PN program, and those that come through the Federal Economic Class. To ensure successful settlement and retention of all groups of immigrants we must pay particular attention to the differentiations and particularities of each group while also attempting to understand the similarities amongst them and what they need to feel welcomed and settled in their new communities.

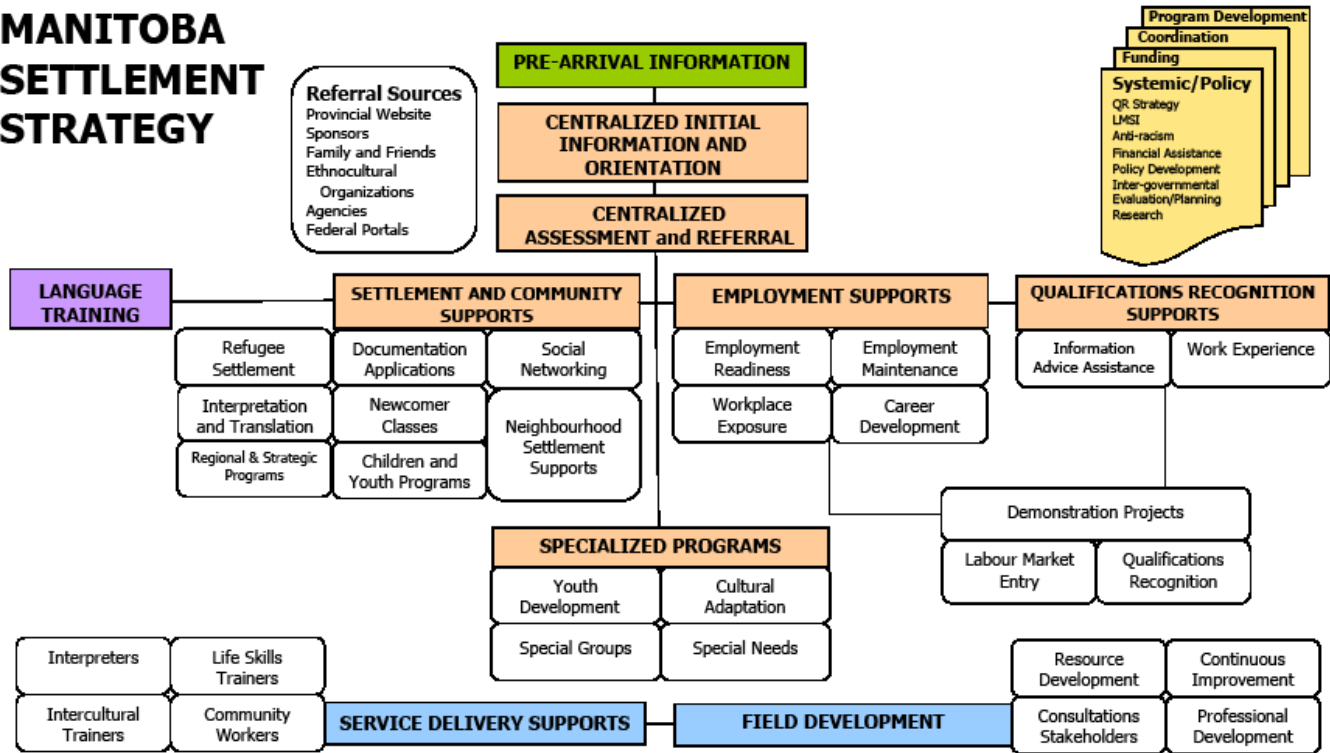
Further research and dialogue should also focus on learning more about the informal community support programs and groups that exist in Brandon. For example, a group called *Mama Latinas* has been created to support mothers and their children as they adjust to life in a new community, fostering companionship and ensuring families' needs are being met. Also, understanding how ethnocultural communities and organizations respond to newcomers and their needs can indicate how groups work together outside of formal institutions and organizations. There is an important role to be played by both formal and informal institutions outside the realm of typical immigrant service providers.

Settlement is not just about the newcomer and further explorations of the impacts of TFW arrivals on specific service sectors needs to be discussed. The next topic for the RDI TFW Dialogue group will expand discussions on settlement, with a focus on the housing, education, and health services sectors. To better develop plans and procedures to ensure a welcoming community and successful settlement and integration, all involved sectors and stakeholders must have an opportunity to voice their concerns, challenges, and successes. Communication amongst all sectors and stakeholders is critical to developing settlement priorities, service provision strategies, and community programs to successfully react to the influx of newcomers that Brandon is experiencing.



**Appendix 1:**

# MANITOBA SETTLEMENT STRATEGY



Settlement and Labour Market Services Branch   Manitoba Labour and Immigration   June 26, 2007



Source: Manitoba Labour and Immigration. (2007).  
[http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/asset\\_library/en/settlement/pdf/settlement\\_flowchart0707.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/asset_library/en/settlement/pdf/settlement_flowchart0707.pdf)

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### **Useful Literature and Websites**

<http://www.settlement.org/index.asp> - for Ontario. Includes useful links and explanations of aspects of living in Ontario.