

Welcome Week 2023

Newcomer Experiences in the Region of Durham

Our objectives

- 1) Share with you the newcomer experience in the Region, as found in two research studies conducted with local constituents and service providers
- 2) Propose short- and long-term calls to action that create the conditions for success for newcomers

About this work

The **Durham Local Immigration Partnership (DLIP)** sits within the Region's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division. It is also funded by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Its main goal is to foster more welcoming communities by **increasing coordination and partnerships** in the settlement and immigration sector in the Region.

Conducting and sharing local research on the immigrant experience in Durham is a key activity of the DLIP.



Take a Walk in My Shoes

Support & Inclusion for Success



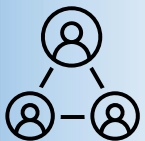
What experiences of empowerment & exclusion do immigrants encounter when searching for professional employment?

What are the service needs of racialized immigrants in Durham Region and how are these service needs currently being met?



Answered through **photovoice methodology**

Answered through **direct interviews and focus groups**



9 participants provided photographs, and participated in interviews and focus groups.

24 participants in interviews and focus groups. 8 service providers in the Region.

What we heard

- 1) Canada and the Region of Durham are **lands of opportunity, but barriers remain** in accessing these opportunities.
- 2) Local programs can help newcomers succeed, but they need to better **reflect the immigrant voice.**
- 3) Successful **settlement is good community building.** Everyone has a role to play.

Canada and the Region are lands of opportunity, but barriers remain in accessing these opportunities



You Are There, But You Are Not (Michelle)

It relates to my experience, because in the picture the gate to the tennis court is open, which means I can enter the court, at the same time I do not have equipment (tennis racket or a ball etc.) or another player to play along with. The same way professionals in various fields are able to get a visa to enter Canada on the basis of their professional abilities, only to find out that they may not be able to pursue the profession as their documents alone do not state exactly what the professional bodies are looking for.

The Shoe that Matters (FLS)

These are my shoes. White is my favorite color. It is when I put them on that I feel I'm at my best. But you see, my white shoes appear untouched. Unworn. Unused. That is exactly where I am at this point. The best of my skills and training is yet to be used. I have worn out my other pair of shoes, and [the] white pair is waiting for its season.

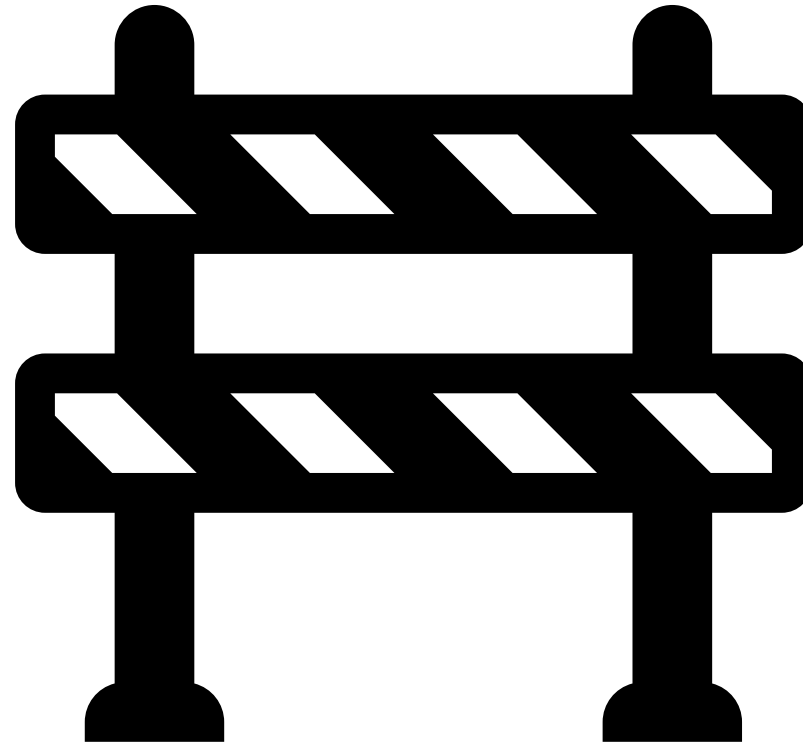


Employment

Strong emphasis on 'Canadian experience' limits educated and qualified newcomers from finding commensurate and meaningful employment.

Networks and connections

Lack of local networks affect newcomers' knowledge and awareness of services and resources available to them.



Access to child care

Lack of child care options for young families without extended family in the country limits their life and settlement choices.

Discrimination

Experiences of racism and discrimination deters newcomers from asking for help or accessing available services.

Local programs help newcomers succeed, but they need to better reflect the immigrant voice.



“Comfort Label” (FLS)

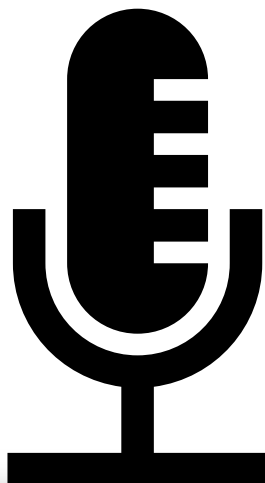
When I arrived in Canada, I feel like red wine inside that bottle. Wine that has complex flavor. From where I came from, I was infused with training, skills and experience—and I felt well-seasoned. I thought I was half-full. Ready to offer what I have. But then, employers have viewed me as half-empty. Not bearing the ‘made in Canada’ label...I needed to be reprocessed and go through quality control despite the richness of my experience.

Tailored programming

There is a need for compassionate, culturally appropriate and safe programming and services tailored to individual need.

So, all these places I have gone to, they think that you are the poorest person in the world, you are so low income that you need to go to them to ask questions ...when you are an immigrant

I don't want a survival job, I will be the worst survival worker, because I am an engineer and a manager, so if you put me to answer calls I will be thinking about the process over there, I will be thinking about how you are managing this and that, and I will not be focused on something so repetitive, my mind doesn't work like that



Appropriateness

Services for newcomers can be too general, and not relevant to their settlement needs.

Successful settlement is good community building



“Swim, Don’t Sink” (FLS)

I must adapt. I must respond quickly to the change of circumstances, just like the Amphibus modifications must be made. So, either I must swim in the water, or sink in the bottom, or to turn around to go back to where I came from. And I have people loaded on me that expected me to stay afloat. Just like the Amphibus, I tackled the water and stayed on the surface.



“Unearthed Rooted Beauty” (Nitasha Gupta)

Roots. This is a photo of a tree unearthed from its roots. This photo reflects how I sometimes felt when I left India: being unearthed or taken out from my roots. It shows how even though unearthed, there is pure beauty in how it is, and it will continue to be a home for many, just as I left and made my unearthed roots home in Canada.

"I don't need fish, I need a net because if you give me fish, I will keep coming back for more fish. I will never be independent. When you leave me a net, I will fish on my own, and I will keep catching a better, fish myself each time."

Safety and community connection

Newcomers need community to safely process their experience. Opportunities to meaningfully connect with other community residents and service providers give space for learning and reflection.

Calls to action

Where we need to be

Hiring and recruitment focus less on “Canadian experience” and focus on “relevant skills” instead

Newcomers have access to key services that can help kickstart their new lives, such as affordable housing and child care

The Region’s settlement service provider network is strong and robust, with sustainable and sufficient funding that keeps pace with community demand

What we can do now

Affirm the value immigrants bring to Canada and challenge myths and misconceptions in public perception about immigrants

Involve new immigrants in decision-making regarding policy change and service provision that directly impact them

“Humanize” services – provide services tailored to individual needs rather a blanket approach

Thank you for your time.

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