

Settlement 2.0 Project: Innovation is in our DNA

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO IRCC

Delivered by PeaceGeeks March 2020



FUNDED BY:



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

FINANCÉ PAR:

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Executive Summary

This report comprises PeaceGeeks' final recommendations to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) regarding the Settlement 2.0 Project.

A **Project Summary** provides an overview of the timeline and key events of the project. The **Recommendations** section details the key recommendations PeaceGeeks is formally presenting to IRCC to work toward a more innovative and collaborative settlement sector in British Columbia and across Canada - a Settlement 2.0 - to better support newcomers now and in the future.

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO IRCC ARE:



INVEST in technology access, literacy & infrastructure as it evolves, and client use of it changes



ENGAGE in conversation with the settlement sector about how funding structures might shift to better encourage, support, and incentivize innovative and collaborative practices and processes, to continue to make effective use of resources, and further build trust between funders and funded agencies



A SECTOR-WIDE CAPACITY-BUILDING APPROACH is needed that builds on existing professional development efforts, and which is also open to exploring innovation approaches from other service-providing sectors



FORMALIZE AND IMPLEMENT knowledge mobilization efforts & practice



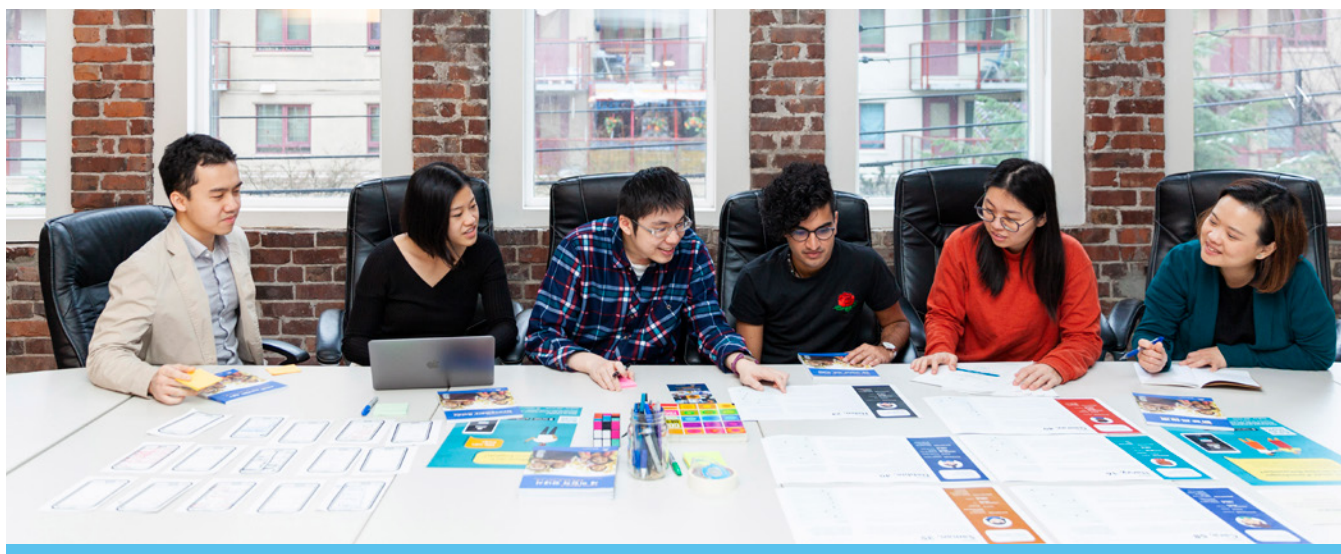
GROUND settlement work in communities to support newcomers in bridging their settlement journey from the early stages of their settlement to when they feel ready to meaningfully call Canada their home



PURSUE asset-based language, programming, and outreach across the sector and beyond



ENGAGE the broader Canadian community in conversations about immigration and settlement



The **Next Steps** section lays out the avenues by which the settlement sector, funders including IRCC, and the Canadian community, including civil society and the private sector, can work together to keep the momentum going as we make strides toward a more agile and holistic settlement sector, and a stronger Canadian community as a whole.

Throughout this project, the term “innovation” has been understood to represent approaches, practices, and the ability to adapt to a rapidly changing migration and settlement landscape, and ultimately to get the settlement sector to a place where stakeholders feel they can stay “ahead of the curve,” rather than feel they are trying to catch up to a constantly evolving environment. “Innovation” incorporates the use of digital tools, and work online and offline in order to facilitate this adaptability and agility. The goal of innovating the sector always remains to better serve newcomers to Canada.

It is important to note that the recommendations made in the report are not new. One of the most consistent findings of the Settlement 2.0 Project is that the sector has been calling for structural changes to facilitate innovative practices and technologies and collaboration within and outside of the sector for years.

As we wrote in our Situational Analysis:

The immigrant and refugee-serving sector is complex. Moving toward Settlement 2.0 requires a workforce and programming model that embraces innovation, technology and continuous learning, has the capacity and know-how to implement innovation, encourages rapid iteration of programs by learning rapidly from failure, and is constantly exposed to new ideas and thinking about how to improve services delivery.

Ultimately, the recommendations are deeply rooted within common principles shared across the sector in Canada. Both within the national interview process and the local community conversations, the recommendations that emerged and are stated within this report reflect shared values, desires, and goals of the settlement sector, for the settlement sector, for newcomers, and for Canada.

With that in mind, this report makes reference to IRCC’s CORE Principles to frame the recommendations within existing approaches toward a more agile, forward-thinking sector that supports service providers and fosters more efficient and sustainable outcomes for all beneficiaries of a Settlement 2.0 future.

Project Summary

PeaceGeeks received funding from IRCC to develop a vision and action plan for exploring how technology and innovation can best facilitate settlement outcomes for supporting newcomers.



The intent is to provide a strategy for a brighter future for the sector - a Settlement 2.0 - one that prioritizes empowering newcomers to be agents in their own settlement journey and which builds the overall capacity of the sector to embrace innovative mindsets and more sustainably support newcomers over time. The Settlement 2.0 Project strives to understand the pre-conditions necessary for effective change, and how the sector can embrace tech and innovation in service delivery and strategic principles.

THE SETTLEMENT 2.0 PROJECT CONSISTED OF TWO PHASES.

PHASE 1 involved the undertaking of a situational analysis of the settlement sector across Canada, which explored the effectiveness of current service delivery models and challenges to open and collaborative innovation in the settlement sector.

PHASE 2 built on the findings of the phase one situational analysis to design and convene community consultations between stakeholders in the settlement sector across British Columbia's Lower Mainland, with the goal of collecting data on how effective collaboration and promotion of innovative responses could address challenges identified in the previous phase.



The **Situational Analysis Report** was completed in Spring 2019. It comprised an extensive literature review, and a total of 36 qualitative interviews with settlement sector stakeholders at varying levels of leadership, from agencies large and small, and from urban and rural regions. This analysis mapped out internal perceptions of current service delivery models, challenges to collaborative innovation, existing assets within the sector, and what capabilities and supports it needs to achieve ideal outcomes to strengthen the sector and better serve newcomers in the future.

The Situational Analysis confirmed the inherent complexity of the immigrant and refugee-serving sector. The sector is complex in many ways, not only within itself, but in the sectors and systems it is surrounded by, and somewhat dependent on, to ensure positive outcomes for its clients. Sector actors feel in a constant state of flux without the capacity, space or resources to shift, learn, and adapt. Funders, service providers, and academics are still determining the best approaches to achieve positive outcomes, create welcoming and inclusive communities, and the most appropriate, innovative, and effective

service models. The sector feels (echoed by IRCC reports) that they are having a positive impact on the lives of newcomers, but also that they know more can be done to better serve newcomer clients and communities. They are very interested in becoming more effective, efficient, and more accessible to all newcomers.

Implementing a Settlement 2.0 vision requires investments of resources, support, different funding structures and relationships, trust, space, and time. In order to build the service capacity for a new or emerging Settlement 2.0 ecosystem the sector and its core funder need to fully explore what Maytree's Alan Broadbent has referred to as the "Three I's of Immigrant Integration:" intentionality, instruments, and investments. Intentionality is about "intending to create success at work, home, and in the community," while instruments refer to "creating the effective mechanisms to give those intentions traction," and investments encompass "financial investment" to "drive success," but also energy investment from "political leaders...and all of us". These "Three I's" are crucial to the success of an innovative, forward-thinking settlement sector.

THE SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS AND GUIDELINES:

- **THE SECTOR** in many ways is already defined by stakeholders who are resilient, have a vision and passion for the future, and a desire to stay ahead of the curve in an unpredictable era of migration
- **BUILDING COLLABORATION** between sector agencies needs to be a priority, and this is widely recognized among stakeholders within the sector already
- **CONTINUING TO BUILD TRUST** between funders and funded agencies is essential for innovation and change to truly occur
- **KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION EFFORTS**, practice & communication need to be formalized and implemented
- **FUNDING MODELS** need to have the flexibility to recognize the resource and time needs of building innovation mindsets, practices, and culture across the sector
- **TECHNOLOGY ACCESS**, literacy & infrastructure require investments in training and appropriate hardware as it evolves, and client use of it changes
- **A SECTOR-WIDE CAPACITY-BUILDING APPROACH** is needed that builds on existing professional development efforts, and which is also open to exploring innovation approaches from other service-providing sectors

These recommendations served as the basis for sparking conversations about innovation, technology, program design, and ensuring positive newcomer settlement outcomes that move the sector to action. They informed the process design of Community Consultations hosted by Simon Fraser University (SFU) Public Square.

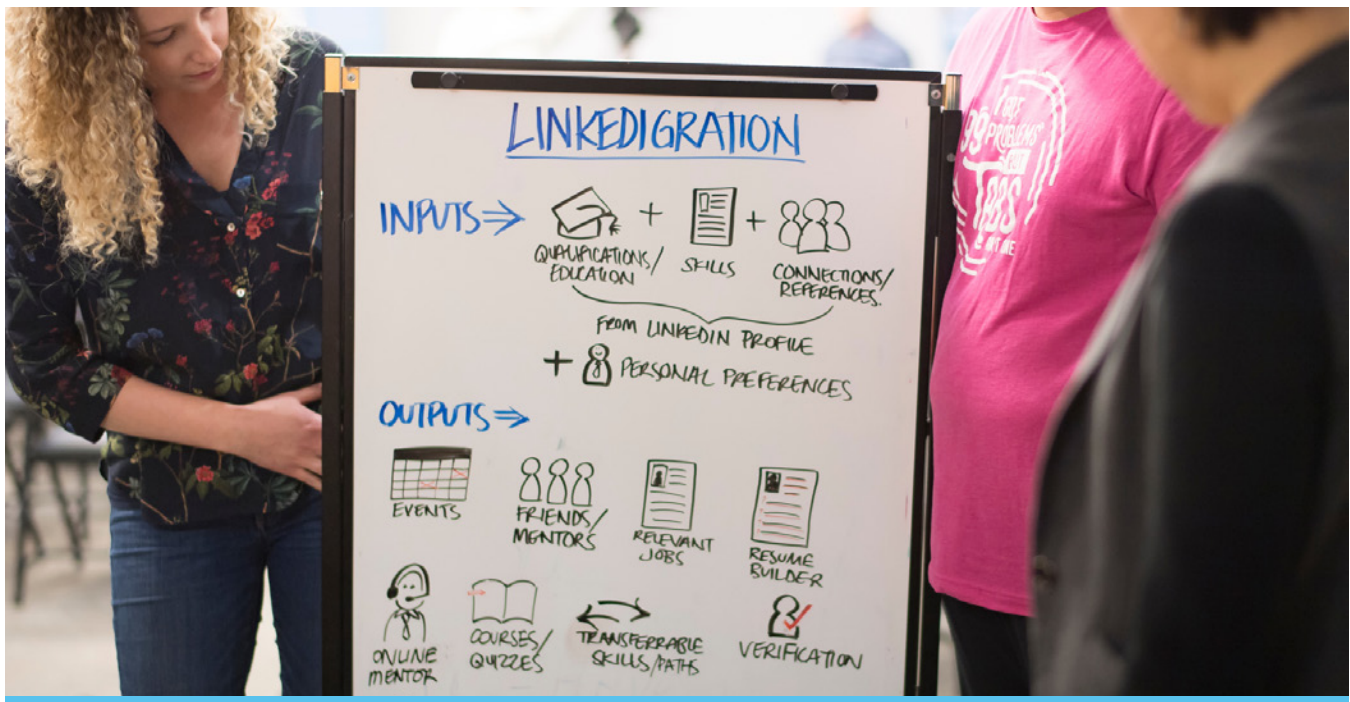
The consultations formed the second phase of the Settlement 2.0 Project. A series of four consultations were held in Summer 2019 in downtown Vancouver and Surrey with provincial settlement stakeholders including newcomers, front-line service providers, settlement sector leadership, and private sector funders and programming partners. A total of 56 participants attended.

THE CONSULTATION REPORT WAS DELIVERED IN AUTUMN 2019 WITH THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS** with private sector partners, and seek private sector funds for exploratory projects
- **TAKE A CLIENT-CENTRIC APPROACH** to programming and objectives/outcomes, grounding settlement work in the community at all possible stages
- **INCORPORATE MORE NEWCOMERS** into decision-making roles
- **ADDRESS SYSTEMIC BARRIERS** when designing new programs
- **DEVELOP OFFICIAL PLATFORMS** for collaboration

Interviewees and consultation participants were encouraged to be frank and honest in their feedback, assured that their identities and specific remarks would remain confidential. Specific quotes included in both reports are thus not attributed to individuals.

To further understand how to turn these recommendations into actionable steps with clear projected outcomes, PeaceGeeks took the Consultations-generated recommendations into one-on-one meetings with settlement service leaders to discuss the nuances of the ideas and how the sector envisions sustainable implementation of more innovative and collaborative practices and processes. Leadership at Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia (IECBC), Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC), and Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia (AMSSA) assessed the drafted recommendations and advised as to their confidence levels in the accuracy and practicality of the recommendations.



THIS FINAL REPORT WAS GENERATED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- The recommendations demonstrate a causal link between the action and the intended results
- The recommendations demonstrate timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and relevance to other recent initiatives (such as IRCC’s “CORE” framework)
- The recommendations are applicable to British Columbia, and Canada more broadly

What the first and second stages of the Settlement 2.0 Project accomplished can be summarized as follows: the Situational Analysis provided a national “lay of the land” to help PeaceGeeks understand the state of technology, innovation and open practices in the settlement sector across Canada. The Community Consultations held across the Lower Mainland of British Columbia bolstered the national findings and offered local examples of how innovative and collaborative practices are being implemented at the community, municipal, and regional levels. Further, the Community Consultations identified

specific preconditions necessary for the settlement sector to more widely and comprehensively embrace innovation and collaboration in the future.

THIS THIRD REPORT TAKES THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL FINDINGS AND PRESENTS THEM TOGETHER TO DEMONSTRATE:

- **A NATIONAL VIEW** of what is needed for the sector to evolve into a more innovative and collaborative space, and
- **HOW LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS** are striving for innovation and collaboration within their settlement environments

The latter examples provide food for thought for IRCC to consider how to support the national settlement sector in moving toward more innovative and collaborative practices as a whole, thus bringing all phases of the Settlement 2.0 project to key focus points that can be carried forward into further conversations with more of the settlement community as IRCC moves toward a Settlement 2.0.



The resulting recommendations detailed in the body of this report are carefully linked to IRCC's "CORE" Principles, as they were formally implemented into IRCC's 2019 five-year Calls for Proposals. These CORE Principles align with the 12 Core Values of Settlement Work identified 20 years ago by the sector itself (CCR 2000).¹ Language used to describe innovation (both in describing IRCC's CORE Principles and by civic tech and other innovation actors), such as *client-centric*, *co-creation*, *openness*, *transparency*, *empowering communities*, *addressing vulnerability*, and *knowledge sharing* is directly connected to the immigrant

and refugee-serving sector's principles in approaches to service provision, program development, and system change. The sector's innovation foundation is already in place.

We provide actionable, scalable, stakeholder-developed recommendations to IRCC and other relevant settlement stakeholders, to build on this foundation, facilitate widespread collaboration and innovative practices and technologies in the sector, to better serve newcomers now and in the future.

¹ 12 Core Values of Settlement Work: <https://crrweb.ca/sites/crrweb.ca/files/static-files/standards.htm#CORE%20VALUES>

Recommendations



RESPONSIVE TO NEED

Within the CORE Principle framework, IRCC defines “responsive to need” as programming that meets the needs of clients as well as society, to ensure newcomers are fully integrated in their communities.

These recommendations come from within the settlement sector. They therefore are inherently illustrative of the needs not only of newcomers, but of the

services, supports, and stakeholders that make up the settlement sector.

As the Situational Analysis found, the sector is defined by key stakeholders and beneficiaries who are resilient, have a vision and passion for a better future, and a desire to stay ahead of the curve in an unpredictable era of migration.

Therefore, supporting broader and deeper collaboration between those sector stakeholders should be an absolute priority. This is widely recognized among settlement stakeholders already. Yet there is not a great deal of trust between funders and funded agencies, and this trust is essential for innovation to take place.

Further, as mentioned earlier in this report, exploring relationships with the private sector, including options for funding and options for partnerships with non-settlement service providers, was strongly recommended at all stages of the Settlement 2.0 research project.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:



A SECTOR-WIDE CAPACITY-BUILDING approach is needed that builds on existing efforts and incorporates models from outside the sector



GROUND SETTLEMENT WORK in communities to support newcomers in bridging their settlement journey from the early stages of their settlement to when they feel ready to meaningfully call Canada their home



CLIENT-CENTERED

“Client-centered” is defined by IRCC as programming that is tailored to meet specific clients’ profiles, with a focus on clients who are vulnerable, marginalized, or face barriers.

Overwhelmingly, the settlement sector and IRCC are in agreement that services, programming, and support must be centered around newcomers. Especially in the Community Consultations, local and regional examples of innovation and community, cross-sectoral collaborations were focused on services that are located within and built in partnership with community infrastructures.

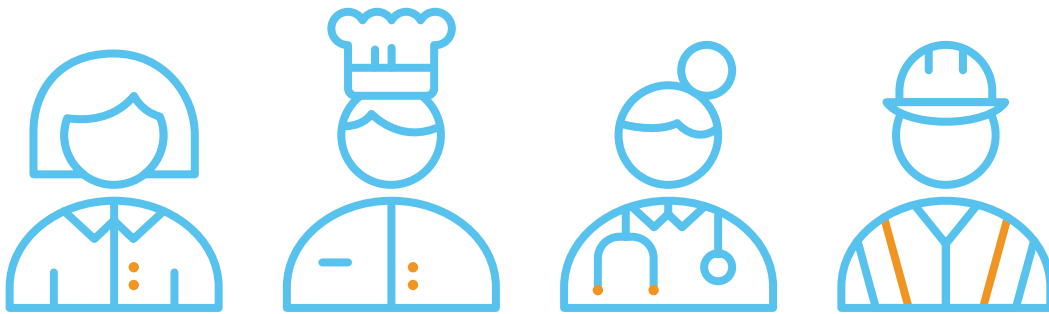
Grounding in community enables innovation by addressing clients’ settlement needs in tandem with holistic supports, building connectivity and bridging between settlement and other system navigation needs. This allows newcomers to ease their settlement journey by fostering community connections and building a sense of home in their new environments. One example that emerged in the Community Consultations was the Surrey School District’s Settlement Workers in Schools and English Language Learner Welcome Centre. The Settlement Workers in Schools program is a good example of a project that started as a regional innovation (in Ontario), and scaled nationally. In BC, 8 school districts, as well as several Service Providing Organizations that work in partnership with their local schools, deliver the SWIS program. These programs

connect school-age newcomer youth and their families with settlement resources through the school. The community-based approach roots settlement services in surrounding community infrastructure, allowing newcomer families to make friends, build networks, and get oriented within their new home spaces. At the Consultations, participants expressed that they had received feedback from newcomers that this approach to settlement programming helps reduce barriers between a “settlement” and “post-settlement” landscape.

Grounding services and supports within communities is one way to continue seeking opportunities to innovate and collaborate. Another method discussed at length at the Community Consultations was seeking holistic support from non-settlement actors. This includes seeking private sector funding, and private sector partnership. This currently occurs across the Lower Mainland at many agencies in the form of employment mentorship programs.² It also includes reaching out to civil society actors, community-oriented non profits that do not fall under the settlement umbrella, and the Canadian community as a whole.

Existing small-scale partnerships are a great first step. However, cultivating relationships for collaborative programs with non-settlement actors, sources of financial support, and advocacy for newcomers within the broader Canadian community is required at all levels of the sector, across the country.

²The employment mentorship programs are a great example of collaboration between the settlement and private sectors. However, these employment mentorship programs are equally an example of the competition that plagues many aspects of the settlement sector, largely due to funding structures. For information on this subject, see the Situational Analysis.



The Settlement 2.0 Project revealed an additional suggestion: change our thinking, our language, and our operational structures within the sector about how settlement services can be delivered.

The current model of immigration in Canada is focused on deficiencies. The public is often exposed to information about what newcomers are *lacking*, rather than what positive opportunities newcomers bring with them when they come to Canada.

Many non-profit service providers are moving toward asset-based models of service provision. Settlement stakeholders expressed a desire to move the immigration field toward asset-based terminology more broadly as well. In doing so, we can help the Canadian community more broadly shift its conceptions of newcomers, and embrace immigrants and refugees more readily. Instead of focusing solely on Needs Assessments, the sector also needs and wants to move towards Asset Assessments.

A key example of this came out of the Community Consultations, which pinpointed newcomer employment as a framework through which to view settlement subjects more generally. Newcomers offer a sustainable

solution to labour market gaps and shifts in Canada. For example, an estimated **250,000 Canadians** are expected to retire each year in the coming decade, leaving enormous gaps in the labour market that could be at least partially filled by some of the 300,000 newcomers that arrive in Canada every year.³ For BC (where this report is situated) to maintain its economic growth, it is estimated that 27% of these job vacancies will need to be filled by 24,300 immigrants each year. Between 2011 and 2016, immigration accounted for 90% of the labour force growth.⁴

Yet newcomers continue to be often portrayed in the media as job-stealers or welfare-drains, rather than as sources of hope, expertise, entrepreneurs, and employers for the labour force. Shifting to this asset-based language can go a long way toward increasing deeper, more widespread Canadian support for immigration, which will benefit the sector long-term. It can also provide an opportunity to more actively create linkages with employers and other inclusion actors to view newcomers as assets to their organizations and communities. The settlement sector, then, has to be the advocate for pivoting to asset-based language, and asset-based service models.

Shifting to asset-based language more comprehensively across the sector, and grounding services in existing community infrastructures will go a long way to reducing barriers for newcomers, facilitating their settlement journey in Canada.

³“Improving Settlement Services Across Canada: Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration,” June 2019.

⁴Immigration for BC’s Future: A Call for Action to Strengthen Newcomer Integration. AMSSA. September 2018.

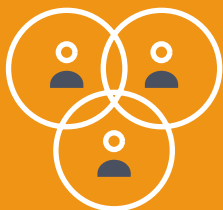
Throughout the Settlement 2.0 Project, PeaceGeeks heard from the settlement community that innovation and collaboration are not terms that should be applied merely to the sector alone.

A broader societal approach to settlement is needed to ease newcomers' paths, as well as existing Canadian's experiences with understanding, accepting, and actively embracing ever-changing migration trends.

A dialogue with the wider Canadian community could help educate Canadians about the settlement sector's efforts and outcomes, and perhaps inform pieces and processes of the work that takes place within the sector.

The Situational Analysis outlined how the settlement process itself is complex, and can take many years - even after newcomers become Citizens, and encompasses multiple phases. Yet often the term "settlement" silos this long, multifaceted journey into a period of time or an insular process of accessing services. The sector as a whole should consider how to better communicate to Canadians that settlement doesn't only exist within this narrow view: it includes how newcomers are introduced to and interact with their new communities every day. Bridging the distances between conceptions of settlement as far as services and supports extend and the settlement experience on the whole is in the best interests of the sector, to gain deeper understanding and wider support from the Canadian community, and it serves newcomers more holistically as well.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:



BRING THE BROADER COMMUNITY into the settlement conversation to promote a whole of society approach to supporting newcomers in their settlement journey from pre-arrival to full and meaningful integration



PURSUE ASSET-BASED LANGUAGE, programming, and outreach across the sector and beyond



ENGAGE THE BROADER CANADIAN COMMUNITY in conversations about immigration and settlement



EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES

In the CORE Principles, “effective use of resources” is defined by IRCC as programming that uses the most effective means of reaching outcomes, including the use of innovative approaches and pilot testing.

The most prolific recommendations to emerge from all stages of the Settlement 2.0 Project was the sector’s strong encouragement of IRCC to develop and implement official platforms for collaboration, and to examine whether the current funding structure allows for widespread innovative practices.

PeaceGeeks consistently received feedback from the settlement community to recommend to IRCC to “change the funding model.” This was always suggested in the context of reorganizing funding structures within existing funding ceilings in ways that meet both the sector’s needs and IRCC’s needs: to make more effective use of resources by restructuring some elements of the funding stream in order to facilitate more widespread and impactful innovation and collaboration.

Stakeholders, particularly settlement sector leadership, implored IRCC to communicate more openly with funded agencies about what it’s looking for from agencies when it distributes funding, and when it assesses annual

narrative reports as part of the existing contribution agreement structure.

QUESTIONS FROM THE SECTOR INCLUDED:

- Is IRCC looking for us to become self-sustaining?
- Is IRCC looking for us to be more entrepreneurial?
- If IRCC is looking for some type of “identity-shift” in this way, how will they support us to get there?

Consistent, two-way communication between IRCC and funded agencies (as well as prospective funded agencies) would go a long way to helping direct the sector toward clear, high level outcomes and better define notions of progress, innovation, collaboration, and outcomes.

The current national funding schedule from IRCC is based on a five-year rotation, with a relatively new Service Delivery Improvements (SDI) model, which issued a Call for Proposals (CFPs) in 2017.

Programs that are considered by IRCC to be successful and well-established still have to re-apply to the five-year CFPs in the same manner as new, untested initiatives. This causes months of work on both sides for what the sector views as largely status-quo funding, expending time, energy, and resources on the application and agreement process rather than on critical work in communities. Stakeholders recommended that programs with good track records, based on outcomes, be “fast-tracked” through the CFP process to ensure their sustainability and uninterrupted continuation, thereby more effectively utilizing assessment, negotiation, and agreement resources for those programs. Of course, rubrics for what constitutes a “good track record,” and how to fast-track those programs while still ensuring they are properly assessed for their outcomes and impacts would need to be determined in careful conversations between the funder and funded agencies.

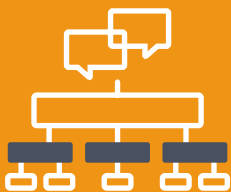
Suggestions to funding model structures also often took the form of implementing a mechanism that more concretely encourages or even incentivizes collaboration. For example, the funder could play a sort of brokering role when applications come in, and as the funder is processing applications and seeing the potential linkages between agencies on project proposals, ask those agencies how they could work together to advance and implement their complementary ideas to more cohesively service newcomers, as well as the sector. Likewise, the funder can proactively identify over-saturation or duplication, and redirect focus to existing gaps, so that more ground is covered in a funding schedule. This symbiotic model was widely recommended throughout every stage of the Project.

In addition, stakeholders were unanimous that innovation is not limited to SDI initiatives, but rather that innovation has been occurring at the agency level since time immemorial. PeaceGeeks repeatedly heard that what often happens is that the funder gets into a headspace that innovation only happens within SDI funding, but that's not true: "we were innovating long before the SDI funding stream was implemented. **Innovation is in**

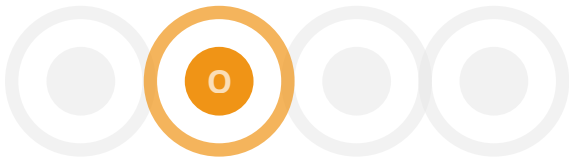
the DNA of our agencies. We're constantly adapting and modifying our programming to be responsive to new immigrant and refugee populations and their changing needs." In general, funding models need to better recognize the resource and time needs of building innovation mindsets, practices, and culture across the sector.

Sector stakeholders were clear that they see innovation funding available through SDI to be useful to pitch and test new approaches and innovations to support newcomers. However, they emphasised that innovation funding is not and should not be limited to SDI. As this report discussed earlier in the context of framing discussions about newcomers within and outside of the settlement sector and the Canadian community more broadly, asset-based lenses will go a long way to supporting progress toward sector-wide innovation and collaboration.

KEY RECOMMENDATION:



ENGAGE IN CONVERSATION WITH THE SETTLEMENT SECTOR
about how funding structures might shift to better encourage, support, and incentivize innovative and collaborative practices and processes, to continue to make effective use of resources, and further build trust between funders and funded agencies



DRIVEN BY OUTCOMES

In their CORE Principles, “outcomes-driven” is defined by IRCC as programming driven by evidence, ensuring the best outcomes for clients.

An outcomes-driven framework is built on agency capacity to collect, evaluate, analyze, secure and act on data. The Situational Analysis explained that the nonprofit sector currently lags behind other sectors in evaluating service effectiveness and impact. This was in part attributed by interviewees to historic focuses on outputs, rather than outcomes. Interviewees noted that building agency capacity around data and information management to collect and utilize client feedback, is essential and desirable.

Further, stakeholders encouraged the funder to implement a national approach to maintaining and updating technology systems and tools. Not only does hardware need to be upgraded and replaced at regular intervals, software, and information management systems need to be updated and integrated to allow sector stakeholders to access knowledge, client data, and

sector-wide measurement tools in order to better inform their work, and better, more cohesively serve newcomer clients.

Currently, the burden falls to agencies to ensure they have the capability to meet new reporting requirements. However, they lack the knowledge, capacity, and resources. The approach among agencies at present is haphazard, out of necessity, because they lack adequate resources to undertake a digital transformation process.

For example, ISSofBC is currently engaged in a digital transformation process that will culminate into NewTrack, a comprehensive client service management system (built on Microsoft Dynamics) that addresses all of their internal program and service offerings, multiple funder reporting requirements and links both outputs and outcome measurements. The intent is to offer this system to interested sector colleagues, on a one time purchase cost, in the Fall of 2020. Leadership is excited at the opportunities cohesive data management will present for more holistic client service, clearer monitoring and evaluation, and stronger outcomes-based reporting.

At the same time the agency recommends, as did multiple interviewees during the Situational Analysis, that this digital transformation should be undertaken at the national level, as it is directly connected to the health of agencies and their ability to be accountable to the funder on outcome, rather than output, reporting.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:



SETTLEMENT SERVICE PROVIDING ORGANIZATIONS need investments to build their own capacity to adopt emerging technologies as a means to improve client-centered outcomes and drive efficiency



FORMALIZE AND IMPLEMENT knowledge mobilization efforts & practice

Next Steps

This section serves to advise IRCC how best to carry the Settlement 2.0 recommendations forward.

Sector stakeholders stressed the importance of both carrying the conversation forward, and implementing future changes nationally, not regionally, because it is important to maintain the ideal that settlement services are held up to a national standard. While regions across the country are diverse and have their own distinct qualities and needs, the perception among newcomers must be that no matter where they put down roots in Canada, they can enjoy the same caliber of settlement supports as anywhere else in the country.

There is an opportunity between now and the 2024 5-year CFP to evaluate the strides IRCC has made toward innovation, including the implementation of the CORE Principles in 2019, and what the sector requires in terms of guidance, resources, and support in order to realistically achieve a more innovative and collaborative settlement sector.

Moving forward, IRCC should consider how it will operationalize the CORE Principles. They are, on paper, aligned with sector principles, so there remains a significant opportunity to put these principles into practice at the funder level. The recommendations made in the report are organized within the framework of the CORE Principles in order to facilitate this continued conversation on cohesively aligning the funder-fundee relationship.

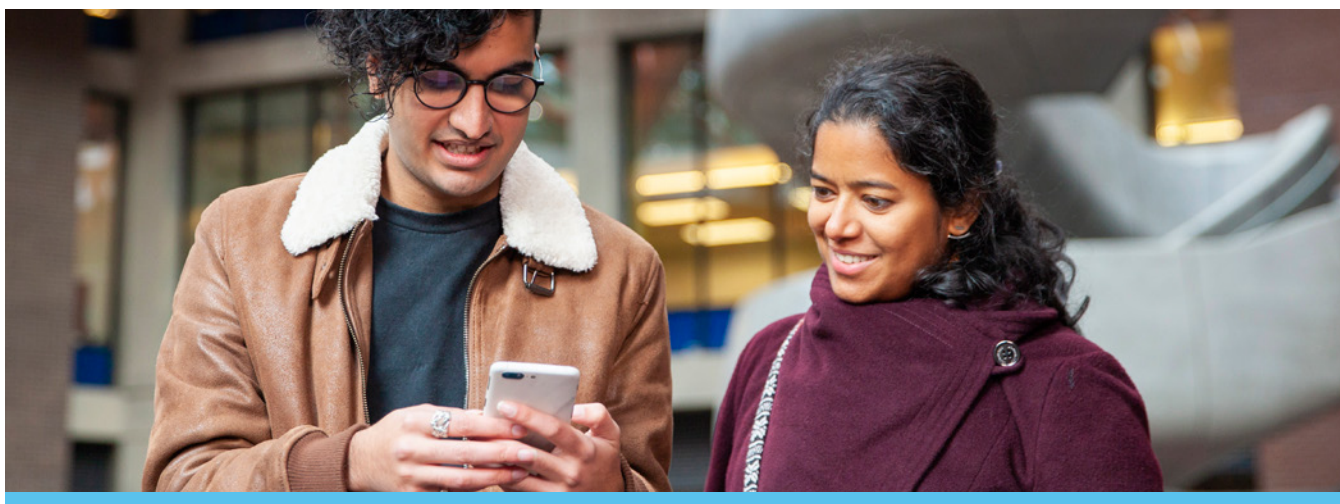
Each CORE Principle has specific recommendations that require intentional investment. However, the first step needs to be national dialogue between the sector and IRCC, perhaps also including provincial funders

and municipal stakeholders (in much the same way as the Vancity Community Foundation participated in the Community Consultation phase of the Settlement 2.0 Project as well as IRCC's own regional consultations leading up to the 2019 CFP process).

A national sector capacity-building approach is needed that builds on existing professional development efforts, but also brings in approaches from other sectors.

The complexities of tackling innovation, capacity, and collaborative service delivery are well understood by the sector. Integration of the CORE Principles into program structures requires a mapped-out concept of intentions, approaches, and impact measurement. For example, if an agency is to be "Client-Centred," does that agency possess the tools, resources, and capacity to effectively and consistently meet the expectations of an IRCC-defined "Client-Centered" approach? If they don't, how is IRCC prepared to ensure that funded agencies have the competencies to effectively meet this Principle? Building on existing efforts and incorporating practices from other sectors have been recommended throughout the Settlement 2.0 project.

It would be beneficial for IRCC to develop a Theory of Change to flesh out the concepts behind the CORE Principles, and establish concrete linkages between "client-centered," "outcomes-driven," "responsive to need," and "effective use of resources," to better guide the national settlement sector in a CORE approach to serving newcomers, and in turn, to support innovation and collaboration through the CORE framework.



Additionally, moving the conversation about innovation outside of the SDI framework is essential. There are a number of additional committees and internal working groups at IRCC where this dialogue is either already occurring, or should be. This includes the Health of the Agency Working Group, Advisory Committee on Social Innovation, National Settlement and Integration Council, and others. Bringing the myriad of IRCC initiatives together will reduce overwhelm brought on by ad-hoc information-sharing, and allow for more efficient and cohesive implementation of shared principles that have been agreed upon by the sector for years. Likewise, settlement Program Officers should be a part of these conversations: they have the deepest relationships with SPOs, as well as the most direct impact on their operations.

This report should be considered as the beginning of a larger conversation. The conversation in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector should continue, and expand outside of urban British Columbia. The experience of rural and more remote communities should also be sought out and incorporated. PeaceGeeks will be presenting these findings to the Immigrant Integration Coordination Committee (IICC) as part of ongoing efforts to seek feedback on the findings from this report, and expand sector input and engagement with SPOs throughout the province.

Building trust between IRCC and funded agencies is critical for innovation and collaboration at all levels to truly occur. IRCC presented its “Vision for a Program Management Reset” at the 2018 AAISA Summit that included comments addressing the issue of trust between IRCC and sector agencies. What was outlined is significant: suggestions for a culture change in the design, delivery, and management of how IRCC develops and implements Contribution Agreements and how they’re managed for the project duration. These suggestions included much of what this report has shared: improved communication built on two-way collaboration-based relationships, widespread information-sharing, a true focus on outcomes and meeting client needs, and building deep trust between the funder and the fundees, from the Program Officer and service provider level, to the more general purview.

This thinking needs to be explored sector-wide and operationalized sooner rather than later. The settlement sector at all levels, across Canada, needs to know that these conversations are happening at various points throughout the country. It is time for those conversations to be brought together. IRCC should explore and identify how best to facilitate in greater detail moving forward.