

Multicultural and Immigrant Services Association of North Vancouver Island

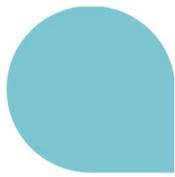
2020 Needs Assessment Summary Report

Welcoming Communities Coalition

February 2021



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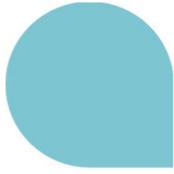


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Executive Summary

{Settlement and integration require a “whole of society” approach to be successful.} -AMSSA

It takes a community to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where newcomers want to remain. International immigrants face many challenges and barriers throughout their journey from first arrival in Canada to becoming productive members of society who add value to their chosen community. Community support is needed throughout this process, beginning with settlement, the challenging adjustment to new cultural norms, the process of community acceptance and finally, as a thriving member of the community.



Newcomers have a wide array of needs depending on the individual and where they are on their journey. There is a need to ensure that these recent immigrants are welcomed, fully integrated and retained in our communities to support on-going community prosperity and growth.

The Welcoming Communities Coalition (WCC), known nationally as a Local Immigrant Partnership (LIP) is a community development initiative coordinated by the Immigrant

Welcome Centre (IWC) in the Campbell River and Courtney regions. Through connecting, conversation, research, public education and strategic assessment, the Welcoming Communities Coalition identifies needs and offers innovative, sustainable solutions to enhance newcomer wellbeing.

This needs assessment determines the current needs of newcomers and raise awareness of those needs with WCC members, other partners and stakeholders, and the wider community with the goal of filling those gaps.

This study surveyed and interviewed recent international newcomers who had settled in the Campbell River and Courtenay region within the past five years, about their integration experience. Community residents were surveyed for their perspectives about immigration and what initiatives might create a more welcoming community environment for newcomers. A wide range of stakeholders who provide services to newcomers including settlement agencies, language training providers, educational institutions, grassroots organizations RCMP, Health Services, Chamber of Commerce and community organizations explored how they could improve upon the services they provide to newcomers. In this report we have taken their voices to the core of our conclusions and recommendations.

Welcoming Community

The vast majority (90 percent) of newcomers surveyed believe people in their community are “somewhat” or “very” welcoming. Likewise, 86 percent of residents surveyed believe their community is “somewhat” or “very welcoming”.

{My neighbors have been very welcoming. When my baby was born last year, all the neighbors brought food and other things to help.}
Focus Group Participant

Nevertheless, not all newcomers feel as though they are a part of the community. Some have expressed they have difficulty connecting with other immigrants, Canadian residents and forging new friendships in the community. This has brought about feelings of isolation – 30 percent of respondents have sometimes felt isolated.

English Learning Opportunities

The importance of English language acquisition is a theme carried throughout this assessment. English language acquisition is identified as one of the primary barriers for newcomers to overcome when they arrive in Canada. Newcomers’ lack of English language competence impacts every aspect of the newcomers’ economic and social inclusion such as making new social connections, finding employment and accessing services needed.

The predominance of English language only community services is shown to be a significant barrier for newcomers to fully access many community services. While translators can be

arranged, the translations may not be always be accurate and misunderstandings can occur. New English language speakers may lack confidence in their English language skills to participate in community programs and services thereby limiting potential social connection opportunities.

Community residents are strongly (65 per cent) in agreement with the newcomer’s survey that more support for language learning and employment is needed for successful settlement and integration of immigrants to the community.

In-class English classes have been challenging for newcomers to attend. Reliance on public transportation, work hours and childcare have hampered newcomer participation. Furthermore, English classes taught at the IWC are limited to lower levels.

{You have excellent services I wish you offer more classes 4,5 level.} Resident
Survey Respondent

A variety of scheduled English language classes delivered by certified instructors, are available through the IWC at no cost to immigrants. During COVID-19, these classes have been delivered on-line. In future, a hybrid in-class and online model will be available, eliminating some of the barriers to English learning.

Lack of English language skills results in significant consequences to newcomers’ employment opportunities. Without adequate language skills, newcomers are channeled into

low pay low skill employment that does not engage a newcomer's experience or education.

{Sometimes it is hard to meet people who don't speak my language. They get impatient with my English because I am slow and still learning.} Focus Group Participant

Employment Support

International newcomers expressed considerable difficulty finding employment that recognized their foreign experience and credentials.

Newcomers encounter numerous barriers in their search for employment including lack of recognition of their skills and experience, discriminatory hiring practices, limited connections and unfamiliar job search customs.



Greater community acceptance

While the majority of newcomer survey respondents did not experience racism or discrimination in the community, 31 percent believe they have experienced discrimination

by others in the community because they look or sound different. These experiences occurred while shopping, at work or while applying for work, and in their neighborhood.

The majority of community resident respondents agree that immigration has a positive influence on the city and recognize the many positive contributions that immigrants bring to their community. A small minority of respondents disagree that immigrants have a positive impact on the city, suggesting there is room for greater community understanding of the positive impacts that immigrants contribute to a community.

{Family playdates in the community are nice – but I don't talk too much with other moms. Sometimes with the other moms it feels like high school because they only talk to each other.} Focus Group Participant

Better Community Services

The Campbell River and Courtenay region encompasses a large geographic area and newcomers in the early stages of settlement may not have access to a personal vehicle. Many newcomers rely on public transportation services to travel to their work, social events, appointments and shopping. Newcomers expressed concerns about the limited service hours and frequency of the region's public transit system.

Lack of affordable and available childcare impacts women's ability to work outside

daytime hours to supplement the family income. Finding affordable and appropriate housing has been a challenge for newcomers in a high demand real estate market.

Better information and collaboration

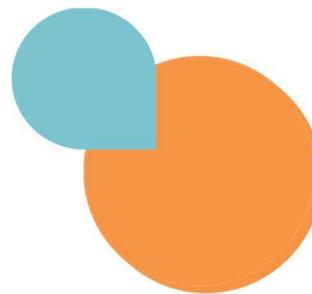
The IWC and friends or family members play a significant role in assisting newcomers to find the services they need. Social media and other websites, community centres and school were also cited as important sources of information for newcomers. Nevertheless, 35 percent of respondents indicated that had they been aware of the services, they would have used them. Several focus group participants confirmed they would also have benefited from settlement assistance at the outset, had they been aware of them.

*{The buses are so bad.
...and I was taking bus one
hour before my time to
work. Then I just sit there
for one hour because I am
one hour early.} Focus
Group Participant*

Recommendations: How Can the Community Better Help Newcomers

- 1) Access: Make it easy for newcomers to find what they need
 - Provision of accurate and accessible materials to newcomers

- Encourage training service providers to have the knowledge about all supports available to newcomers
 - Develop a “where can I find...?” app.
 - Build collaborative networks to better connect information and services to newcomers
- 2) Cultivate community belonging and learning
 - Creation of public awareness campaign to promote benefits of immigration and multiculturalism
 - Promote more multi-cultural community activities
 - 3) Promote meaningful employment opportunities
 - Develop strategies aiding newcomers in improving job readiness and securing employment
 - Encourage the business community and employers to introduce incentives for mentoring on-boarding programs
 - Establish a database of immigrant friendly employers and employment opportunities
 - 4) Break down community Barriers
 - Improve public transportation services
 - Encourage municipal governments to increase affordable rental housing



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Definition of Terms Used in this Report

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1 Introduction

Immigration is a significant source of ongoing growth and prosperity for Canada. Canada's population growth can largely be attributed to the arrival of newcomers.

Immigration brings vibrancy, diversity (social, economic and cultural), high education levels (generally higher than Canadian-born people according to the 2016 Census), skills, ambitions and economic growth. Immigration is a vital driver in a fast-changing world, with immigrants continuing to participate enormously in growing Canada's future through their contributions to various industries.

British Columbia, the most ethnically diverse province in Canada, is home to a growing immigrant population contributing to BC's Gross Domestic Product. It is predicted that there will be 903,000 job openings (a 50 percent increase) in the province between 2018 and 2028. Immigrants will need to fill about 27 percent of these jobs¹. There is a need to ensure that these recent immigrants are welcomed, fully integrated and retained in our communities.

It takes a community to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where newcomers want to remain. Immigrants go through different milestones throughout their journey. They experience various challenges and have a wide array of needs depending on the individual and where they are in their journey. A newcomer travels through many stages on their journey from first arrival to becoming productive members of society who add value to their chosen community. Community support is needed throughout, beginning with settlement, the challenging adjustment to new cultural norms, the process of community acceptance and finally, as a thriving member of the community.

What is a welcoming community?

It takes a community to welcome newcomers.

- A welcoming community has a strong desire to receive newcomers and to create an environment in which they will feel at home.
- A welcoming community ensures newcomers are able to participate fully in all aspects of community life.
- A welcoming community ensures newcomers have access to a full range of services and programs and can find meaningful employment opportunities.

The Welcoming Communities Coalition (WCC), known nationally as a Local Immigrant Partnership (LIP) is a community development initiative that officially began in June 2016 to coordinate and enhance settlement and integration services through strategic partnerships. WCC is coordinated by the Immigrant Welcome Centre (IWC) in the Campbell River/Courtney regions. The primary mission and mandate of the Welcoming Communities

¹ British Columbia Labor Market Outlook: 2018 Edition (Government of British Columbia, 2018)

Coalition is to facilitate the development, implementation and improvement of settlement strategies that will lead to successful integration of new immigrants and refugees while fostering their inclusion in the community. Through connecting, conversation, research, public education and strategic assessment, the Welcoming Communities Coalition identifies gaps, needs and offers innovative, sustainable solutions to enhance newcomer wellbeing.



This needs assessment will determine the current needs of newcomers and raise awareness of those needs with WCC members, other partners and stakeholders, and the wider community with the goal of filling those gaps. The essence of this assessment is to more purposefully build and maintain a welcoming and inclusive community in the Campbell River and Courtenay regions that values all its members and helps them to meet their basic needs so that they can live with dignity, engage actively, and contribute to the community. Findings from this study will assist in tailoring local programming and service delivery while supporting a coordinated, comprehensive and strategic approach to immigration and integration in the Campbell River and Courtney regions.

1.1 Research Questions

This study addresses some of the perceived needs of newcomers, identify the barriers and obstacles that may hinder satisfying these needs. The research questions under consideration include:

- What has been the Immigrant/newcomer experience integrating into the Campbell River/Courtney regions as it relates to integration into Canadian culture and sense of belonging?
- What are the implications of barriers and challenges immigrants and newcomers experience towards their successful community settlement and integration?
- How can settlement service providers, community at large and government organizations foster a more welcoming and inclusive community for immigrants and newcomers?

{Settlement and integration require a “whole of society” approach to be successful.}
AMSSA

The aim is to create a community approach that will celebrate and support the inclusion of international newcomers where they feel at home. Most importantly, this report explores immigrant needs and puts special emphasis to the “voice of immigrants”.

1.2 Methodology and Methods

Primary and secondary data sources are used in this study. This study used the mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative design. The data collection strategies used included surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Primary data gathered through survey instruments and interviews from stakeholders, service providers and settlement organizations occurred between August and December 2020.

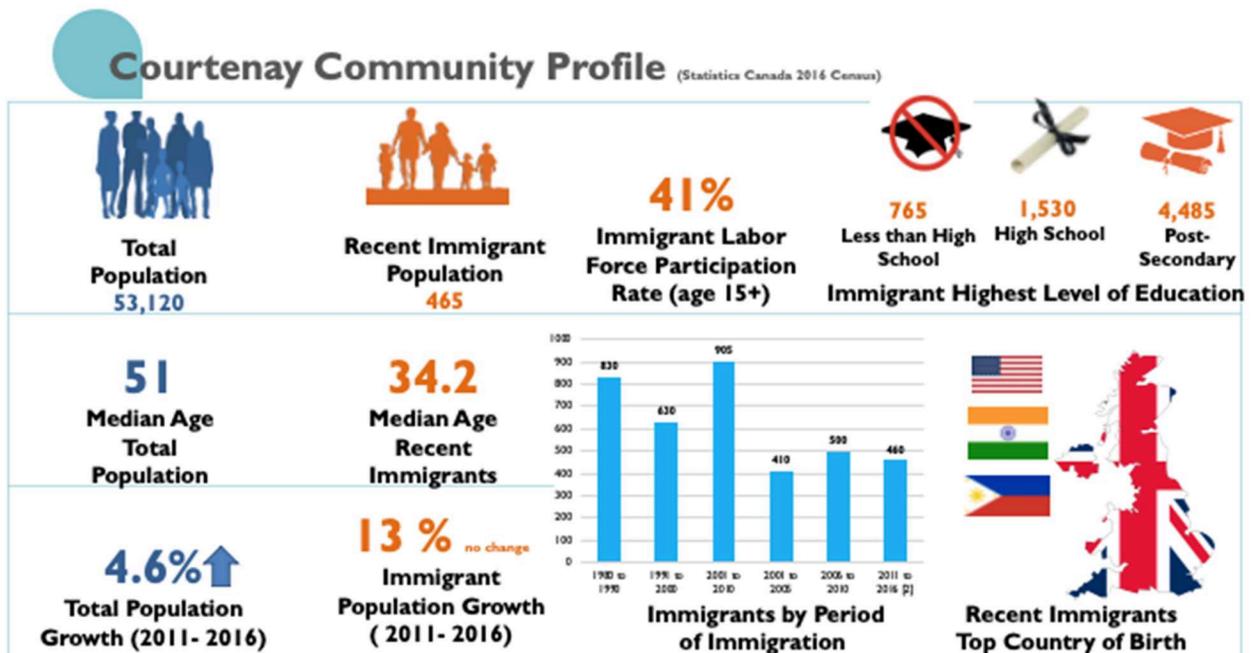
Secondary data sources for demographic and immigration statistics reported here include Statistics Canada (StatsCan), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Government of British Columbia (B.C.).



This report aims to reflect the essence of the ideas and perspectives raised during the engagement sessions and from online survey results. It does not attempt to include every comment received and does not intend to imply consensus on the part of participants. It presents a summary of what was heard from participants.

2 Demographic Profile of Immigrants in Campbell River and Courtenay Regions²

Overall population growth in Campbell River³ slowed slightly, between 2011 and 2016 (increasing by 4.9 percent from 36,096 to 37,861 people). This compares to the provincial average of 5.6 percent population growth over the same time period. The Campbell River immigrant population as a percentage of the total population declined from 11 percent in 2011 to 9.6 percent in 2016. This may be because the immigrant population remained static while the general population increased. Whereas, total population in Courtenay⁴ increased by 4.6 percent between 2011-2016 from 51,787 to 54,157. The immigrant population made up about 13 percent of the total population in 2011 and has not changed.

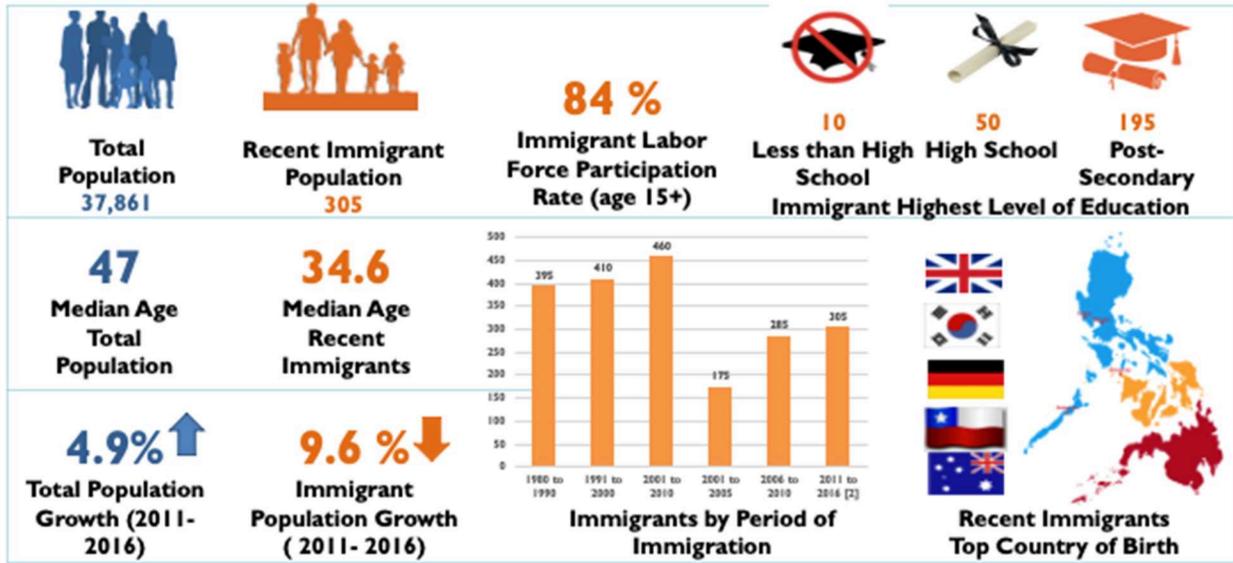


² Welcoming Communities Coalition of North Vancouver Island: this includes the northern part of the island. It is geographically dispersed with small urbanized centers but generally the population is relatively small. Although the IWC provides settlement services in the northern region, it does not represent a significant component of their clients.

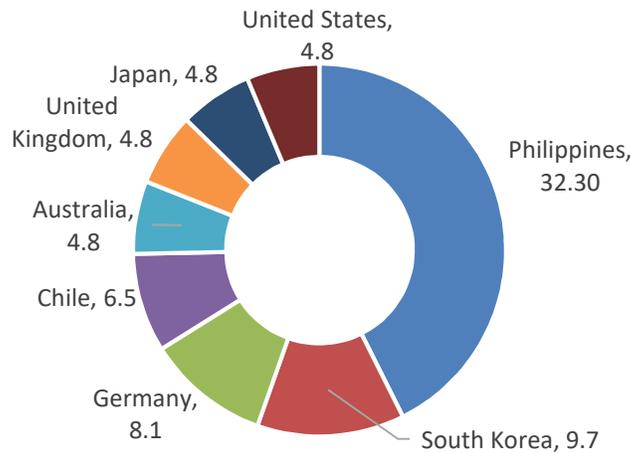
³ Census Agglomeration (CA) refers to a Canadian geographic delineation that includes an urban core population of at least 10,000 plus adjacent municipalities that are economically and socially integrated. The Campbell River Census Agglomeration encompasses the City of Campbell River plus the surrounding Strathcona D RDA. A map of the Campbell River (CA) can be viewed here: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=944&TOPIC=1>

⁴ The Courtenay Census Agglomeration includes <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=943&TOPIC=1>

Campbell River Community Profile (Statistics Canada 2016 Census)



Campbell River Recent Immigrants by Top Countries of Birth, % (2011-2016)

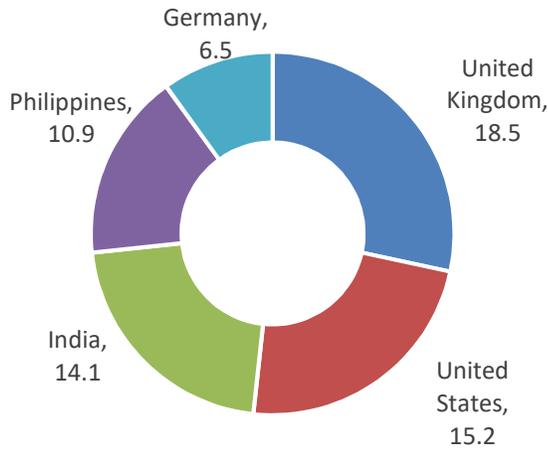


Source: Statistics Canada - 2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016185.

There were a total of 465 recent immigrants to the Courtenay region and a total of 310 to the Campbell River area between 2011 and 2016.

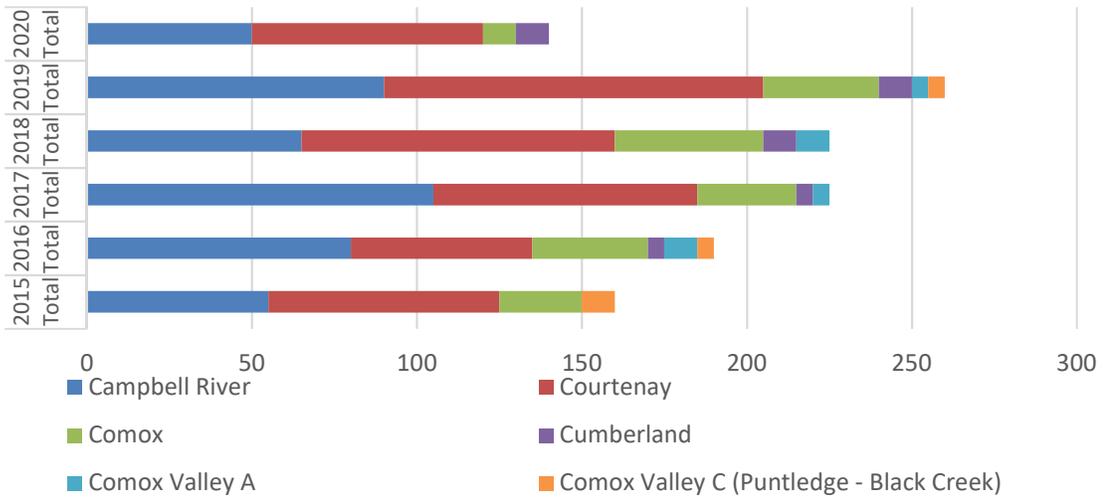
The differences in immigrant settlement between Campbell River and Courtenay would have implications for newcomer settlement needs. While English language instruction may not be a settlement need for English speaking newcomers, community integration assistance would nevertheless be beneficial for all newcomers.

Courtenay Recent Immigrants by Top Countries of Birth, % (2011-2016)



Source: Statistics Canada - 2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016185.

Total Number of Permanent Residents by Destination and Period of Immigration, Jan 2015 - Nov 2020



Source: IRCC_M_PRadmiss_0012_E

More recently, IRCC data reports the highest ever number of permanent resident immigrants to the region, topping 250 newcomers in 2019 alone. Since then, international immigration dropped off substantially in 2020 over 2019 due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic and the increase in Canadian international application fees. Over the 2015-2020 period, the majority of newcomers to the region settled in Courtenay followed by Campbell River.

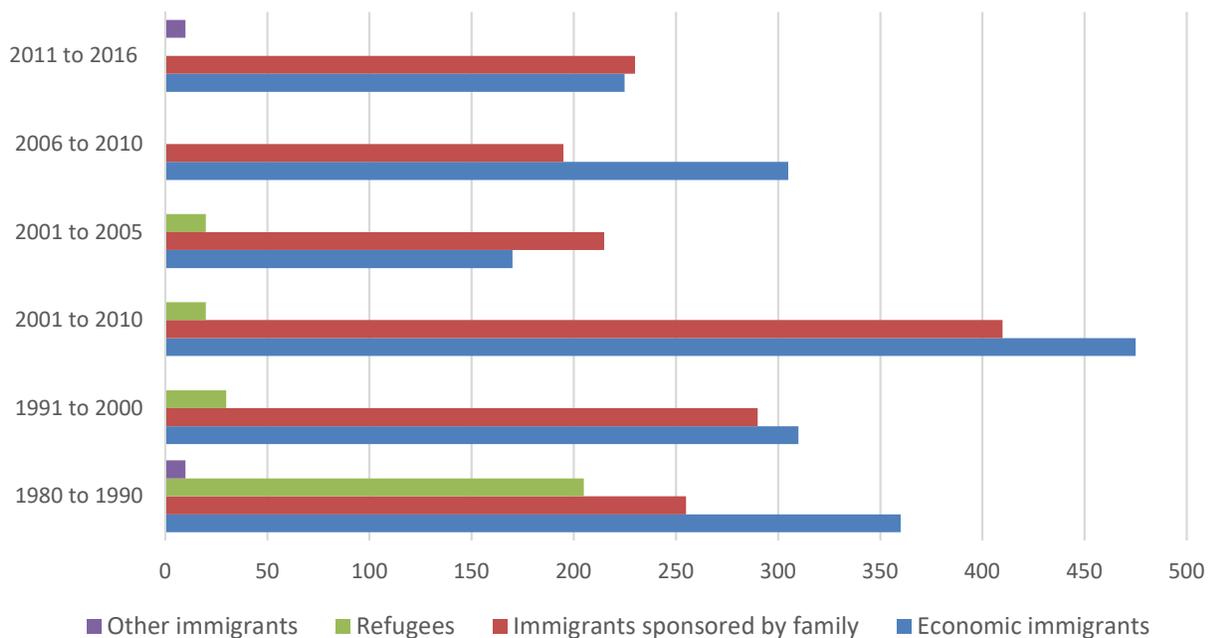
Did you know?

Immigrant Welcome Centre's
Top 10
countries of client origins:

- 1) Philippines
- 2) Vietnam
- 3) China
- 4) India
- 5) South Korea
- 6) USA
- 7) Great Britain
- 8) Syria
- 9) France
- 10) Mexico



Immigrants by Admission Class, Courtenay, 1980-2016



Source: IRCC_M_PRadmiss_0012_E



- Up until 2011, Economic immigrants represented a significantly higher proportion of newcomers to the Campbell River and Courtenay region. More recently it is immigrants sponsored by family members that has outpaced economic entrants. This has implications for the type of settlement services needed and where these newcomers might obtain information regarding those services.
- COVID-19 had a significant impact on newcomer arrivals into Canada in 2020. Canada and the provinces are actively undertaking steps to significantly increase immigration over the next decade.

Did you know?

- 16.1 % of recent immigrants (2011-2016) to Campbell River were under 15 years of age
- 14.1% of recent immigrants to Courtenay were under 15 years of age and a further 10.9% were between 15 and 24 years old
- In comparison to the regions' resident population, recent newcomers median ages are considerably younger

3 Findings: Newcomer Study Participants

3.1 Newcomer Focus Group Participants: Who We Talked To

Newcomer in-person interviews and focus groups were held in both Campbell River and Comox Valley.

Did you know?

In 2019, nearly **250** international immigrants settled in the Campbell River and Courtenay region

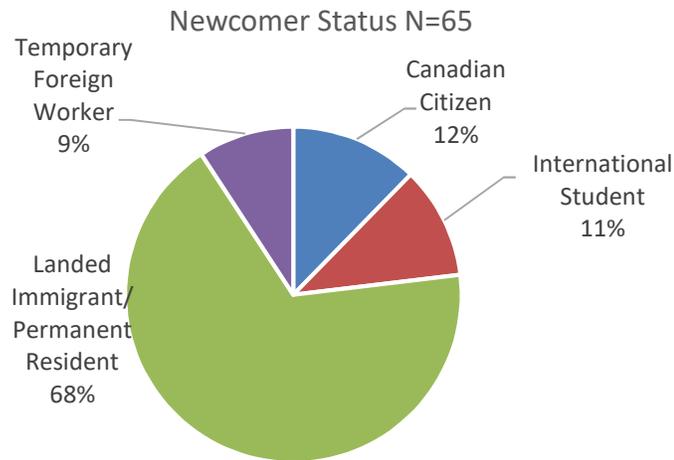
The conversations were facilitated by a team from WCC who followed an established moderator's guide. The study interacted with twelve participants who chose to participate individually or as a couple. Participants originated from eight different countries. Of those twelve participants, eight resided in Comox Valley and four in Campbell River from a variety of immigration classes. The majority had arrived in Canada over the last two to four years.

3.2 What We know About Newcomer Survey Respondents

The total number of respondents to the newcomer survey was 102. The demographic characteristics shown in this section represent characteristics of respondents only and may not reflect of the total newcomer population. Completion of all survey questions was not mandatory for inclusion therefore the number of respondents varies by question. Newcomer immigrant survey respondents represent those immigrants that arrived in Canada within the past 5 years. The newcomer survey respondent's resident community and immigrant class shows respondents come from across the region and under a variety of entry classes. The majority (68 percent) indicated they are permanent residents.



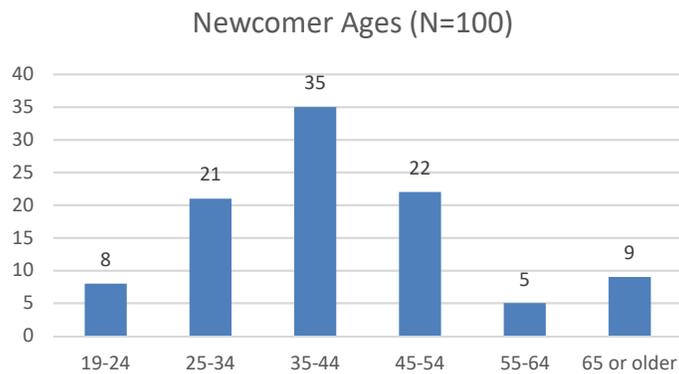
3.2.1 Newcomer Status



3.2.2 Newcomer Residence

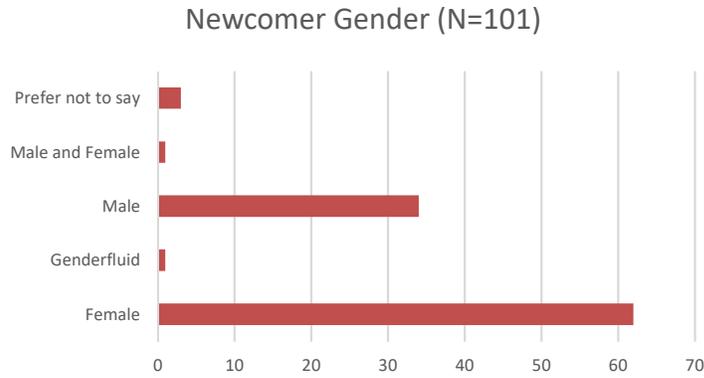
	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Grand Total
Temporary Foreign Worker	4	4	8
Landed Immigrant/Permanent Resident	32	41	73
International Student	4	3	7
Canadian Citizen	5	3	8
	42	12	96

3.2.3 Age Distribution



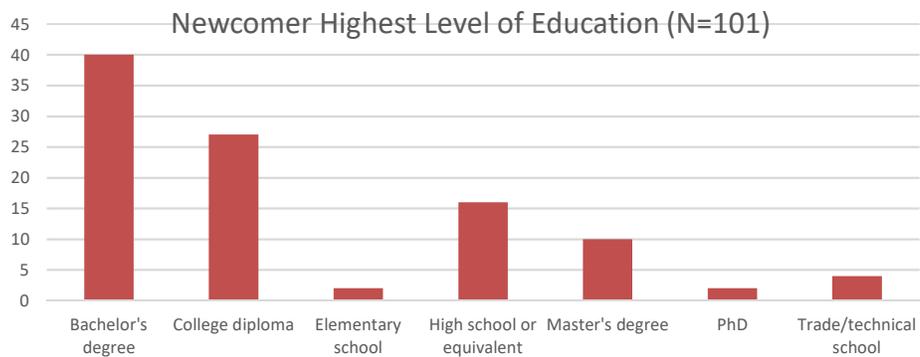
- Newcomer age distribution shows the core age group of respondents falls between the ages of 25 and 54. These are the primary household formation and career building years.

3.2.4 Gender

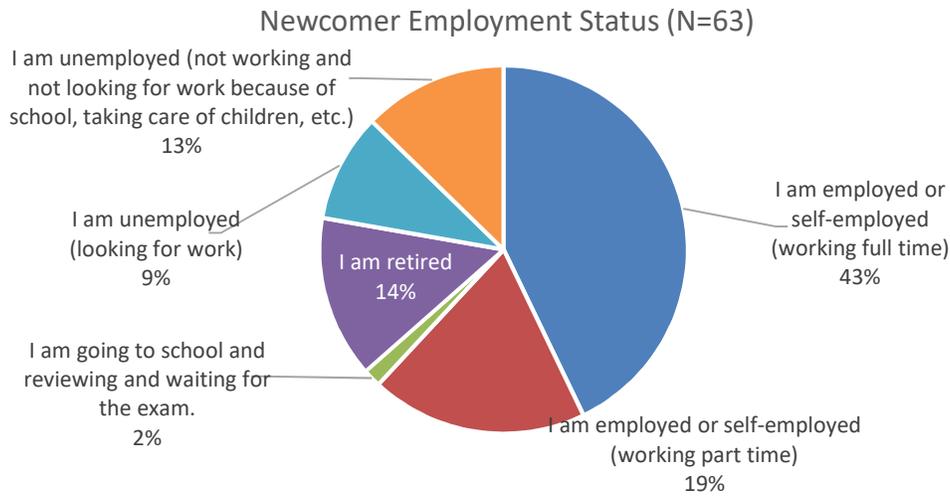


- The majority of respondents hold post-secondary degrees or diplomas and are overwhelmingly female which is not representative of the total population and therefore introduces bias to the results presented.

3.2.5 Education Level

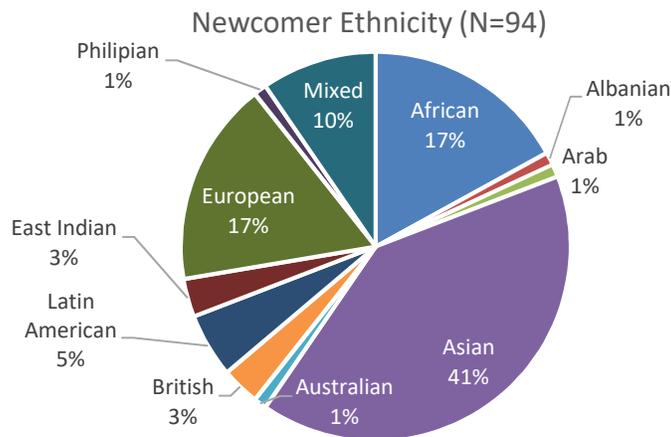


3.2.6 Employment Status



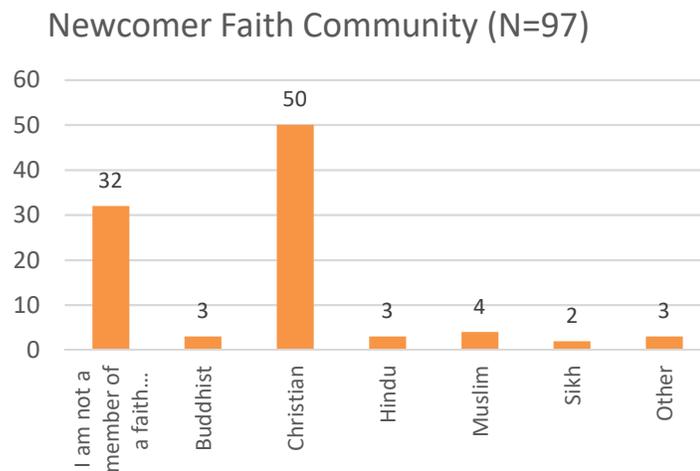
- 63 percent of respondents are employed while 9 percent are unemployed and looking for work. The remainder are either retired or not looking for work.

3.2.7 Ethnicity and Cultural Identity



This was an open-ended question. People were invited to interpret and answer this question in a variety of ways based on their self-view. While some responded with their birth country, others their cultural affiliation and still others, their ethnicity. Survey respondents originate from countries all over the globe but in the main have arrived in the Campbell River and Courtenay region from Asia, Africa and Europe. Similar to Campbell River's recent immigrant population generally, survey respondents from Asia dominate at 41 percent, and this also coincides with IWC's 4 of the top 5 clients' countries of origin. In comparison, the Courtenay recent immigrant population is dominated by newcomers from European and UK countries and while these representations are included in the survey respondents, they are at a comparatively smaller percentage to the actual newcomer population. It should be noted that survey newcomer populations do not represent actual newcomer ethnic or cultural distributions.

3.2.8 Members of Faith Community



The faith community is a key community constituency for newcomers to develop friendships, opportunities for volunteering and provision of an emotional support network all of which are important contributions to a newcomer's sense of belonging in the community. Of the total survey respondents, 67 percent of newcomer respondents indicated they are members of a faith community.

4 Settlement Experiences of Newcomers

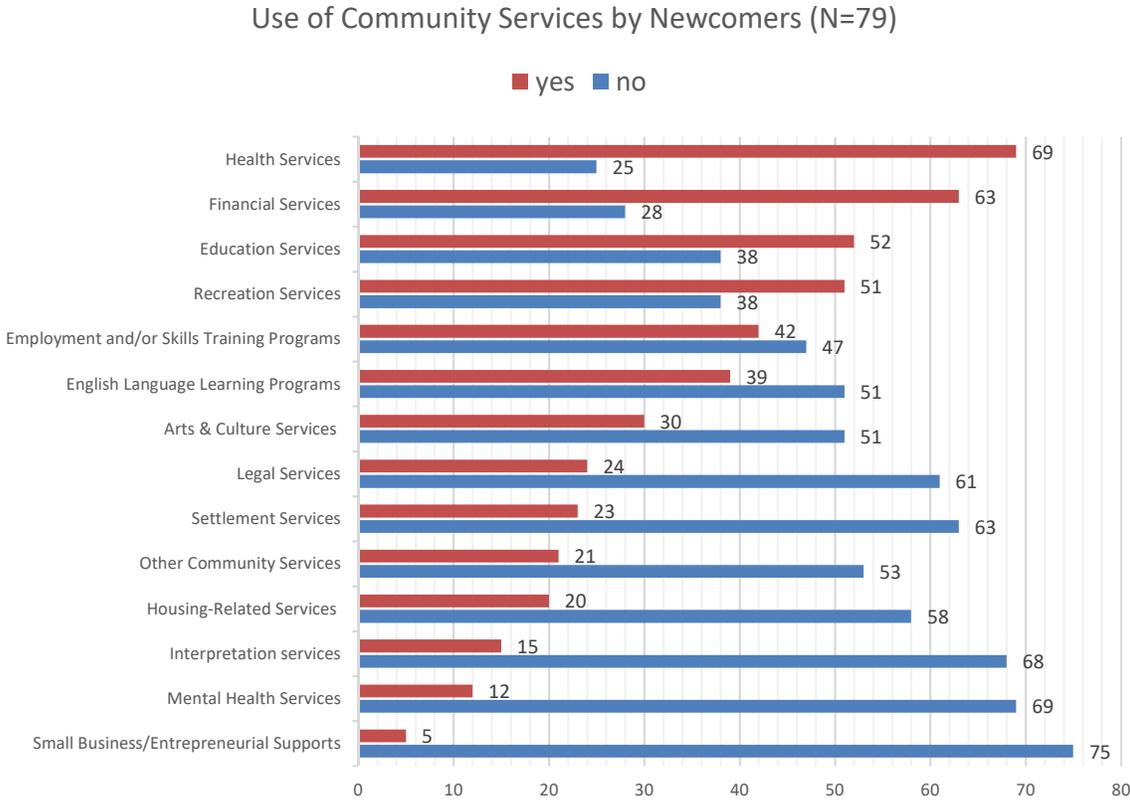
This section outlines the experiences and challenges at various points on the newcomer journey to community settlement and integration after arrival. It is based on survey and focus groups participants’ responses. Elements considered range from basic settlement services such as orientation, language acquisition, employment and housing support and help with daily life to social inclusion and integration support. Each journey is unique, so this report is a balance between capturing individual nuances while at the same time identifying common threads to shed light on community priorities towards the progression of building of a “welcoming community.”

4.1 Settlement Services Accessed by Newcomers

This section examines the experiences of newcomers with respect to which settlement services they accessed, information sources they used to find services they needed, and reasons for not using services to better understand the settlement experiences of immigrants. Newcomers were also asked to rate the quality level of the services they used.

Both immigrant specific and basic community services were included in the survey question. Survey respondents were asked which services they have accessed.

4.1.1 Community Services Used by Newcomers



The majority of survey respondents and focus group participants had accessed health services and financial services. Just over one half accessed education services and recreation services most probably by newcomer households with school age children. Employment support services and English language learning are also in high demand by newcomers. Business/entrepreneurial supports, mental health services, and interpretation services have the lowest access by respondents. The low access rate of mental health services is not surprising given the stigma many cultures attach to the public acknowledgement of mental health problems.

{We were not forced to leave our country due to safety. We chose to come here, so our circumstances are not the same as everyone.} Focus Group Participant

The type and extent of services needed by newcomers is largely dependent on the entry class of the newcomer and at what stage they are in their settlement journey. For instance, it could be that newcomers felt they did not need any settlement services because family and friends were helping them find what they needed, or as economic entrants, they were able to navigate the new society easily on their own. Correlations were explored between services not accessed and gender, geographic location and age cohort. No correlations from the data were evident.

Just over 41 percent of respondents felt they did not need settlement and integration services. A breakdown of immigrant class was not explored in this survey, but it may be considered in future assessments, whether there is a relationship between immigrant class and services needed. However, it is important to this study, that 35 percent of respondents indicated that had they been aware of the services, they would have used them. Several focus group participants confirmed they would also have benefited from settlement assistance at the outset, had they been aware of them.

{I also did not know about the Immigrant Welcome Centre when we moved here, so we used Google to find what we needed. We struggled to find a home and spent months searching ..., but eventually we found a nice apartment. We also struggled to find a family doctor. I found it hard to find programs for my child..... and would have liked to find more play groups and social activities....} Focus Group Participant

{I would like to volunteer but don't know where to find volunteer jobs.} Focus Group Participant

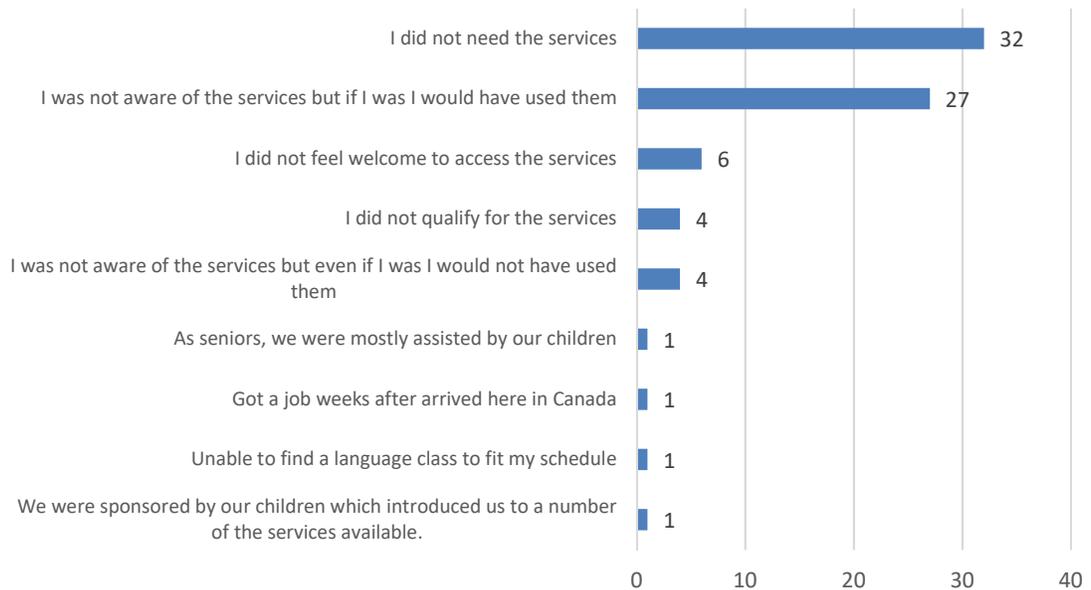
Generally, it seems that immigrants do not access as many services as are available to them and lack of information is a significant barrier to accessing those services. It's clear from this analysis that the majority of newcomers that participated in this study, valued the settlement assistance they received. Settlement is the first step towards integration and assists newcomers to overcome barriers related to the immigration experience so they can participate in social, cultural, civic and economic life.

{Recreation for kids is much better here than in my home country so we have been happy with the recreation here.} Focus Group Participant

{I loved going to Strong Start because I felt included with the other parents. I also went to another group for mums and babies that made me feel connected and I could practice English.} Focus Group Participant

4.1.2 Reasons Newcomers Did Not Use Services Offered

Reasons Services Not Used (N= 78)



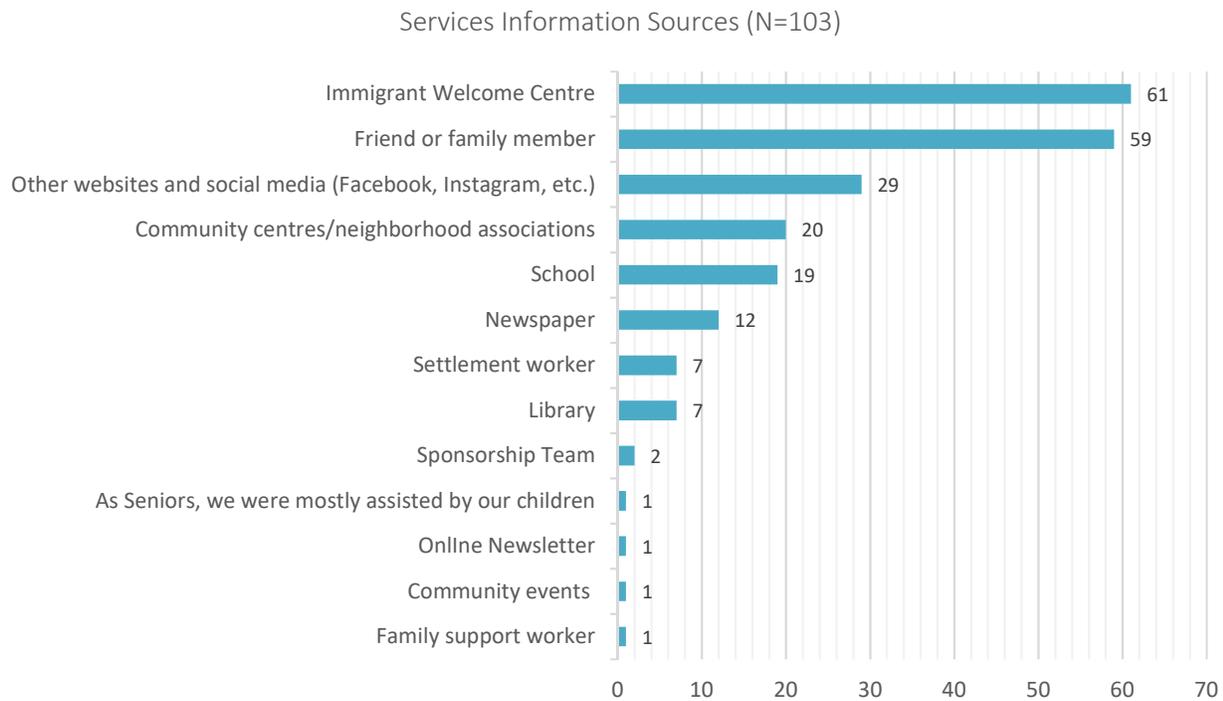
The IWC and friends or family members play a significant role in assisting newcomers to find the services they need. Social media and other websites, community centres and school were also cited as important sources of information for newcomers. A number of focus group participants with a Canadian spouse indicated they did not need to search for any services because their partner knew where to find the services they needed. This is also the case with those participants with family members or children to assist them with their settlement needs. Difficulties mentioned by several focus group participants arose with their employment search and finding affordable housing.

{Finding an affordable house was so hard. [all agreed with this emphatically]} Focus Group Participant

{Now we are beginning to buy a house, and it is very complicated. It would have been helpful to understand this process before we started.} Focus Group Participant

{... from school district was hugely helpful – with any questions and helping us connect with others and helping us talk with teachers and understand the school system and how things work.} Focus Group Participant

4.1.3 Information Sources Used by Newcomers



Newcomer challenges finding information or services they needed is a common thread expressed by numerous participants and survey respondents. Frequently it is basic information about living in Canada which would make newcomers’ lives so much easier but which Canadians take for granted and therefore don’t mention to newcomers – like shovelling snow to prevent ice build-up. Also, the language barrier limits the ability of newcomers to access information which is commonly in English.

{The biggest challenge is being away from my parents and learning English. I feel lonely because I don’t speak English well and I can’t find a job until I know more English.} Focus Group Participant

{Sometimes it is hard to meet people who don’t speak my language. They get impatient with my English because I am slow and still learning.} Focus Group Participant

{This conversation group is helpful for being connected.} Focus Group Participant

{Learning new culture was so hard –it was a new language, everything new. So hard to meet people} Focus Group Participant

{Speak English, it is so important – taking the classes, it is good way to make friends. To make Canadian friends, need more than the basic English} Focus Group Participant

{I like our weekly conversation group to practice English and would like to join more activities like this to meet people and practice English.} Focus Group Participant

English language acquisition is identified as one of the primary barriers for newcomers to overcome when they arrive in Canada. Lack of functional English impedes their ability to secure relevant employment, meet new friends and operate on a daily basis in a new completely different environment.

4.2 Service Quality Level

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of service they received for those services they accessed, on a scale of “poor”, “fair”, “good” or “excellent”. Respondents who rated the quality level of the services they accessed as either “poor” or “fair” cited the “high cost of services”, “services didn’t help” and “lack of sufficient information” as the primary reasons for their assessment. Cultural barriers, language barriers, unfriendly staff and lack of coordination were named as other reasons for their low ratings.

4.2.1 Reasons for Low Service Quality Ratings

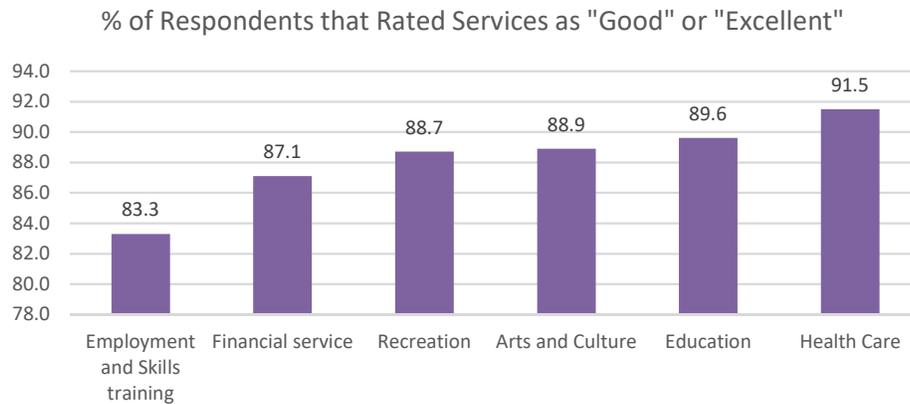


Legal services and employment services were rated low most frequently. Legal services were assessed poorly by about one-third of those that accessed these services because of high cost, long wait times, with cultural and language barriers, providing a lack of information and unfriendly staff. Low ratings for employment services were also given by 10 percent of those who accessed these services due to long wait times, language barriers, the service was not helpful, there was a lack of coordination and the staff were unfriendly. The small number of respondents that accessed mental health services cited language barriers and long wait times for their low assessment. Reviews for housing and business services were mixed but language barriers and lack of information were noted.

Respondents who used any of the services in the survey were generally satisfied with the quality of service they received. On the whole, respondents rated the services they have used as “good” or “excellent”. Health care and education were the most frequently accessed and were also given “good” or “excellent” ratings most frequently.



4.2.2 Services Given High Quality Ratings



{I received all the best attention in the hospital and with the doctors, I had everything I needed.} Focus Group Participant

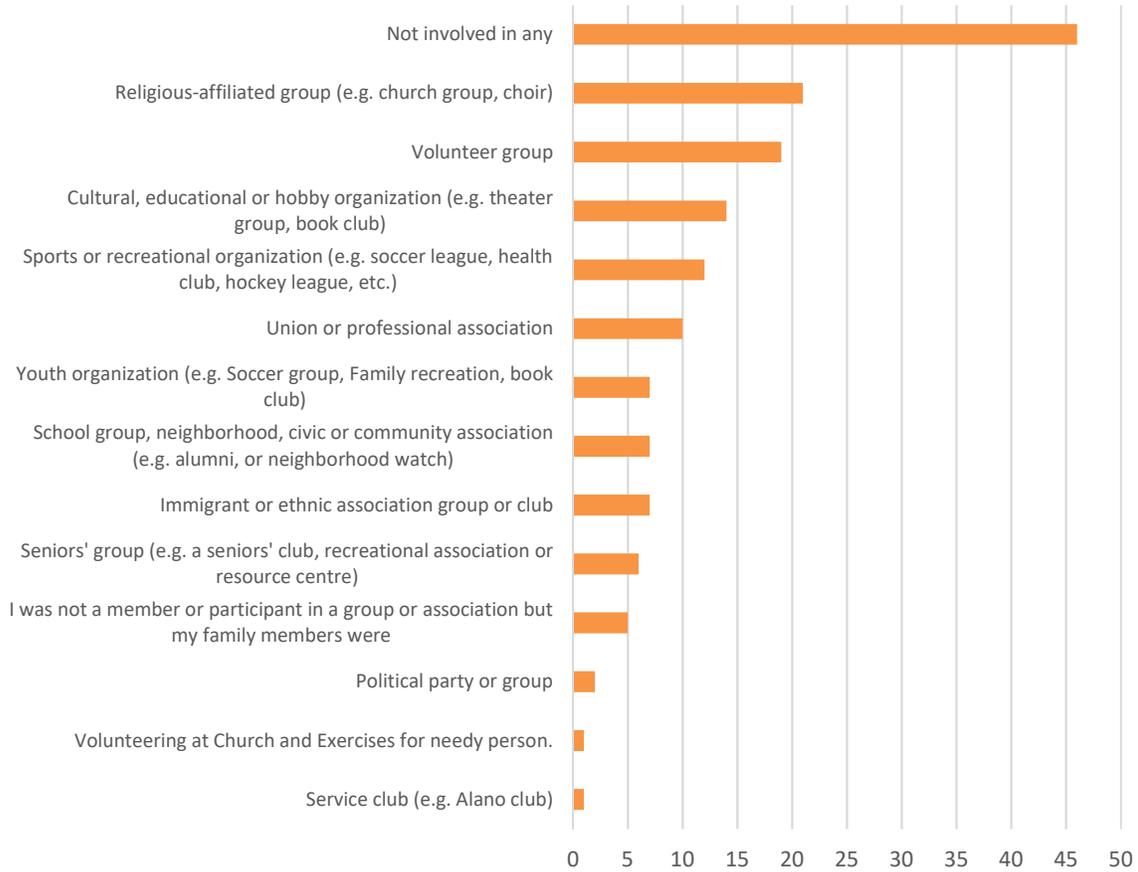
4.3 Community Participation

While 45 percent of newcomers are not involved in community-based activities, more than one-half, 55 percent, of newcomer survey respondents are involved in some kind of community activity. Many of these are very active community members involved in multiple organizations or group activities. Community involvement plays an important role for newcomer integration, making social connections and feeling at home in the community.



4.3.1 Newcomers Community Involvement

Newcomers Community Activities (N=103)

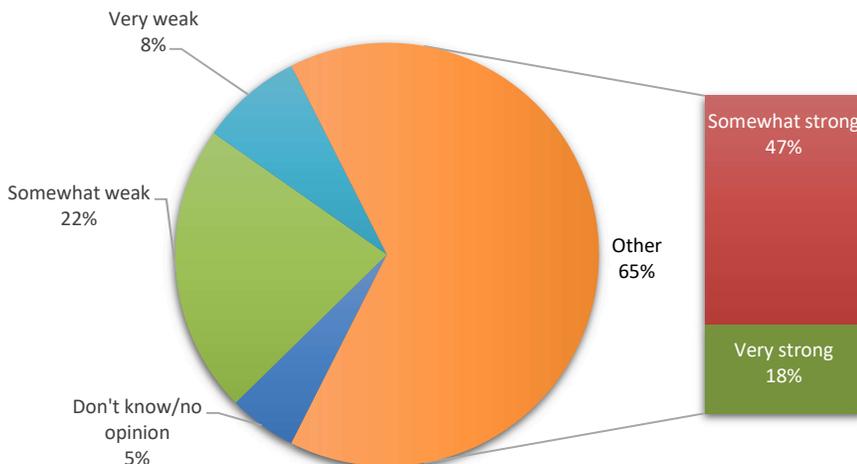


4.4 Sense of Belonging

The majority of newcomers who responded to this question feel either a “somewhat strong” or “very strong” sense of belonging to the community in which they live. A very high percentage (90 percent) also consider the community as “somewhat” or “very” welcoming.

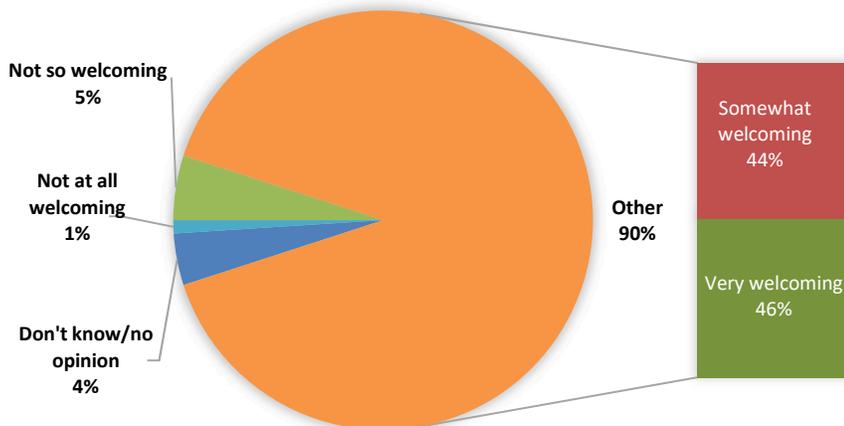
4.4.1 Newcomer Sense of Community Belonging

Sense of Community Belonging (N=77)



4.4.2 Newcomer Feeling Welcomed

Welcoming Community (N=100)



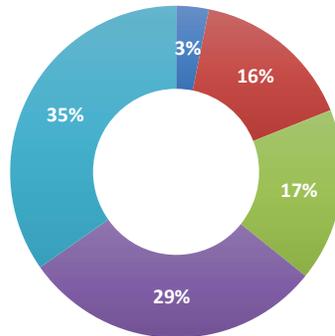
Nevertheless, not all newcomers feel as though they are a part of the community. Some have expressed they have difficulty connecting with other immigrants, Canadian residents and forging new friendships in the community. This has brought about feelings of isolation – 30 percent of respondents have sometimes felt isolated, 17 percent often, and 3 percent always feel disconnected and alone in their community.

{Family playdates in the community are nice – but I don't talk too much with other moms. Sometimes with the other moms it feels like high school because they only talk to each other.} Focus Group Participant

4.4.3 Feelings of Isolation

Feelings of Isolation (N=95)

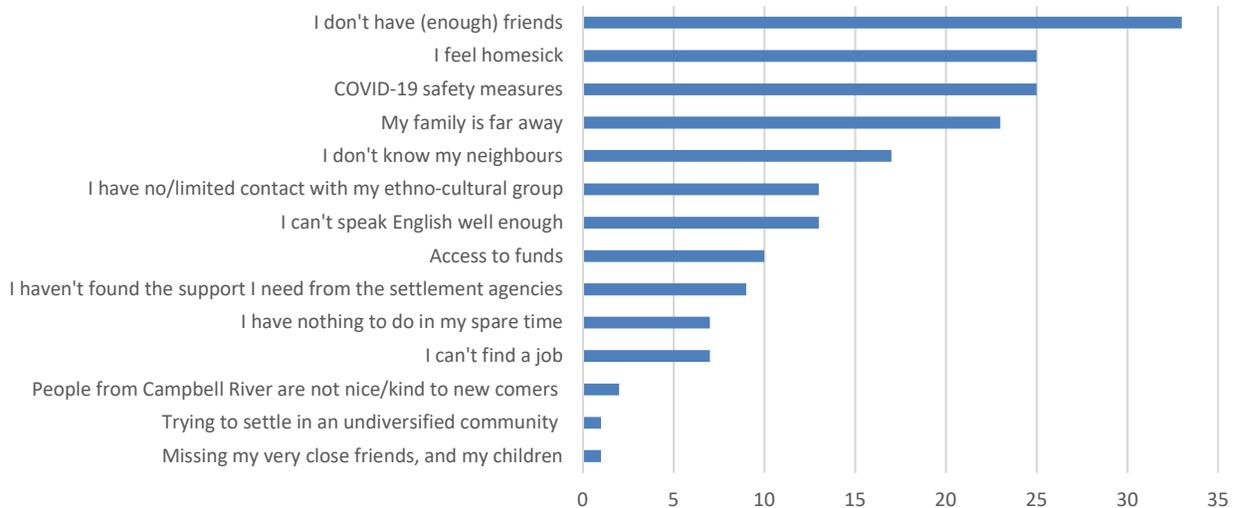
■ Always ■ Rarely ■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Never



{People are polite, but not friends. They will be nice, saying “have a good day”, but to make friends, that is the tricky part.} Focus Group Participant

{Would like more social groups, get together with other immigrants. A month ago, I was really sad and lonely. I would like to find other immigrants to talk to.} Focus Group Participant

Reasons for Feelings of Isolation (N=68)



Lack of a sufficient social network of friendship connections within their ethno-cultural group as well as community-based relationships and distance from familial support contribute to newcomers' feelings of isolation. English language barriers make it challenging for some newcomers to make new friends in the community. COVID-19 safety measures exacerbated the inability to foster these relationships.

{Yes, there is a lot of information and amenities for immigrants. If you know how to find out about the opportunities, there are many.} Focus Group Participant

4.5 Community Inclusion

{Yes, it is a community feel here. People respect nature and don't litter too much, do volunteer work, care about the environment.} Focus Group Participant

{My neighbors have been very welcoming. When my baby was born last year, all the neighbors brought food and other things to help.} Focus Group Participant

{We also love living here and do not want to leave. We planned to only live here three years but now we are applying for permanent residency and are buying a house. The most important thing for us is our children's happiness, and they are so happy here.} Focus Group Participant

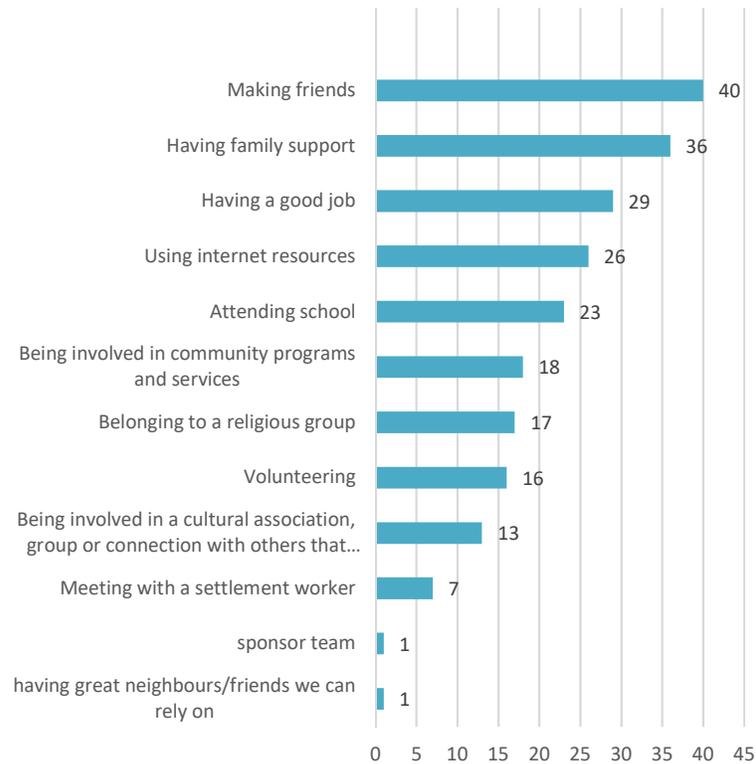
{Yes, it is difficult to socialize and meet new people because of the different culture and customs. Canadians are more reserved, and I was not sure how soon I should call my new friends to get together. It is a different rhythm.} Focus Group Participant

{At the Temple in Campbell River they have a big festival with lots of food and people from Campbell River and people from Courtenay. I feel connected then.} Focus Group Participant

{I would also like to go to another international festival. The festival at my Temple is so nice and would like more like that festival. This helps make immigrants welcome.} Focus Group Participant

Newcomers were asked what makes them feel happy and settled in the community. Family support and making friends in the community was chosen most often by newcomers as the reason for giving them a sense of belonging and feeling settled in the community. Finding a good job ranks highly as well but making social connections is by far the most important factor contributing to newcomers' inclusion and wellbeing.

Feeling Happy and Settled (N=101)



{Very happy in the community – people always say hi, very welcoming. People that you don't know are quite welcoming. I will stay here in Campbell River. It is peaceful, not like a big city.} Focus Group Participant

4.6 What Newcomers Bring to the Community

Not only do newcomers add to a community's resilience through cultural diversity, they bring strong family values, an entrepreneurial spirit and a willingness to give back to the community. They are educated, hardworking, and open to learning about their new home.

{I am bilingual, I am ready to help people around me and I am a very happy person, open to everyone and anyone.} Newcomer Survey Respondent

{I am a (medical professional) with many years of clinical experience in China, but I have to re-take the (medical) license in Canada. It is hoped that Canada can recognize China's study experience and license of Chinese medicine. I know that Canada needs to protect the local industry, but as a Chinese medicine major, it originated from China. Our clinical practice experience in China is better than that of local schools} Newcomer Survey Respondent

{I will try my best to help others because I am so thankful for all the help that my family and I received.} Newcomer Survey Respondent

{Contribute the skills and knowledge that I have. And is always welcome to learn new things from the community.} Newcomer Survey Respondent

What We Heard

- 35 percent of those newcomers that did not use services would have used them had they been aware of them
- 90 percent of newcomers surveyed believe people in this community are “somewhat welcoming” or “very welcoming”
- 60 percent of newcomers are busy people making new friends and helping out – volunteering, singing in choirs, active in service clubs and community groups, and cultural organizations
- No surprise, 65 percent feel a very strong or somewhat strong connection to the community however 35 percent have a weak sense of belonging in the community
- COVID-19 has significantly impacted newcomers’ ability to connect socially
- 50 percent expressed they felt isolated and alone often or sometimes in the community (pre COVID-19) over the past 5 years. They feel homesick and miss their family and have not developed enough friends in the community.
- 31 percent believe they have experienced discrimination by others in the community because they look or sound different. These experiences occurred while shopping, at work or while applying for work, and in their neighborhood.
- “Making Friends”, “Family Support”, “Good Job” and “Attending School” were identified as the top 4 things that make them feel happy and settled – that is, supportive social networks and productive work.

5 Biggest Challenges Faced by Newcomers

Imagine yourself being transported to a country where everything is different from where you came from. Here, no one speaks your language, social conventions and culture are very different, and you have no idea where you are going or how to get there. Somehow you have to find a job, learn the language and figure out what to do when it snows. This is what many newcomers experience.

{Another thing we didn't know was what to do with garbage and recycling. This information was hard to find. And when it snowed the first time, we didn't know what to do – our neighbors helped us to shovel snow for us because we didn't know that it would turn into ice if we didn't shovel.} Focus Group Participant

The challenges newcomers experience includes cultural adjustments, discrimination, and finding affordable housing, but language acquisition, finding employment and obtaining information for getting through the day in a new environment are paramount for newcomers.

Most newcomers to Campbell River and Courtenay regions are very happy to be living here. When asked about the level of their connection within the community, 65 percent of newcomer respondents indicated they have a “very strong” or “somewhat strong” sense of belonging. But, for some the settlement journey has been bumpy such as labour market access, service use, social integration and cohesion, and language acquisition. Some of these concerns are directly related to the inability of community infrastructure to keep up with growing demand such as housing, which has an impact on both long-time residents as well as newcomers, and the increase in newcomers can strain these shortages for example childcare and housing⁵.

{More language classes would be good because I have been waiting to get into a class.} Focus Group Participant

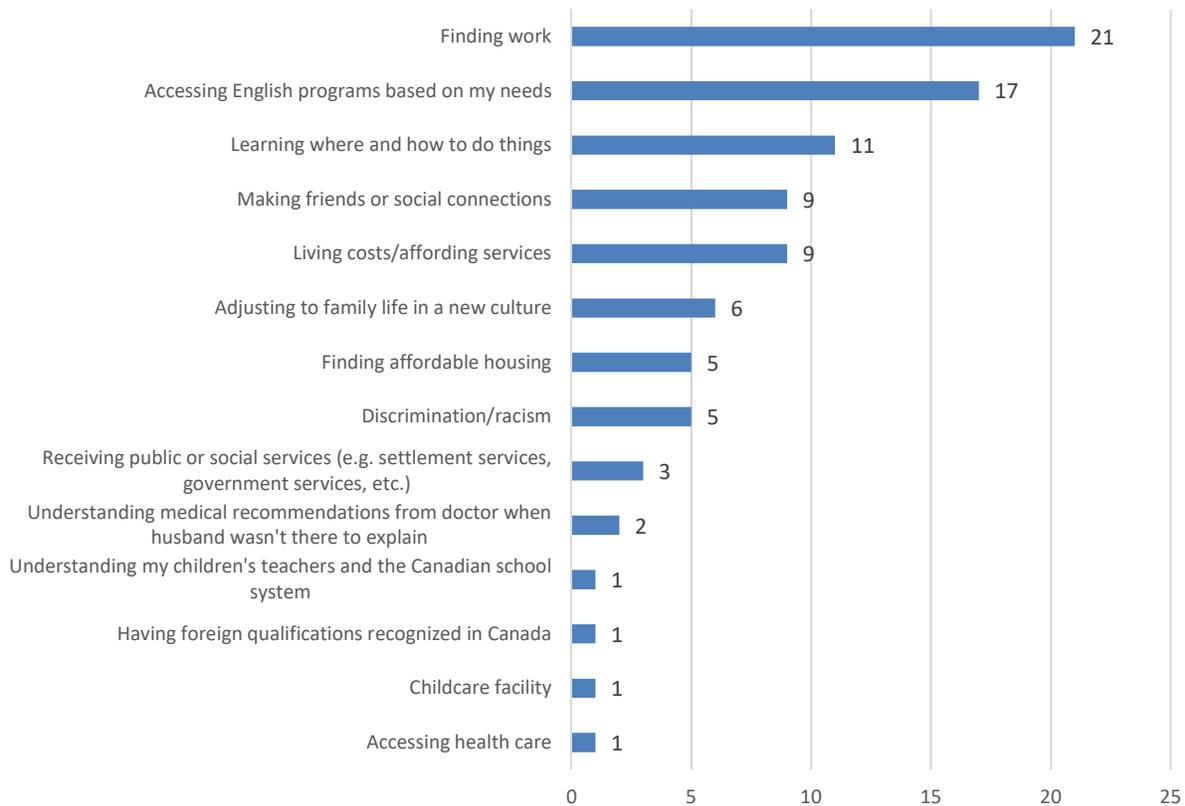
{Yes, I would like to take more English classes and maybe an advanced one that includes writing, because my English is stronger now.} Focus Group Participant

{Yes, and I would also like more conversation groups and social activities. I would love to join a book club.} Focus Group Participant

Finding employment, learning English and obtaining information about where and how to do things posed the most frequent challenges to newcomers' establishing a sense of belonging in their chosen community. These challenges would typically be associated with settlement issues. Making social connections, finding affordable housing and adjusting to a new culture were cited as secondary concerns.

⁵ (Brandon University, Rural Development Institute, 2015)

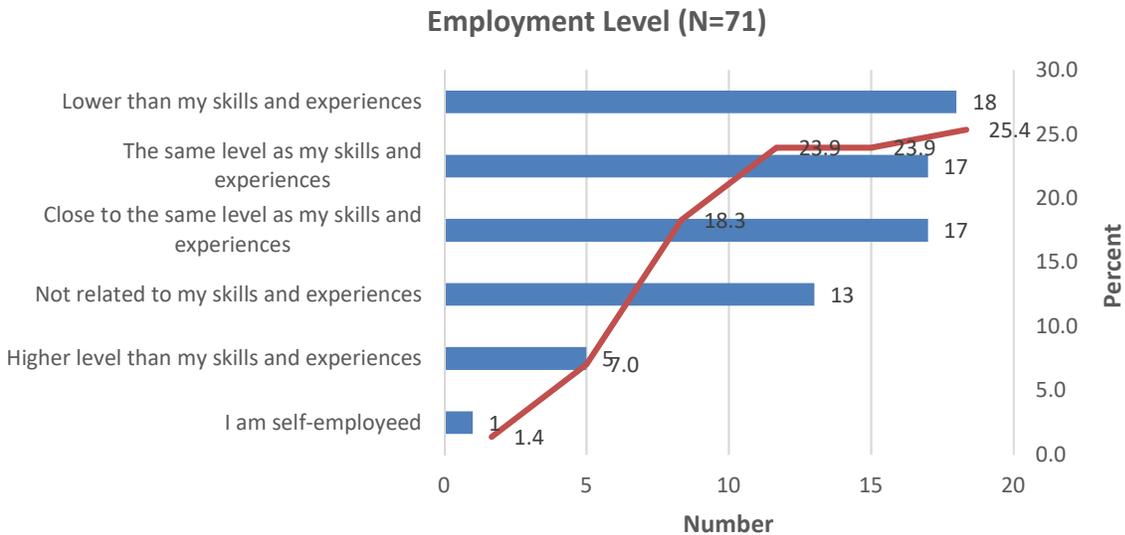
Newcomer Biggest Challenges (N=92)



5.1 Employment Search Support

Employment is a necessary part of the settlement process because income is needed to provide for oneself and one's family. As shown above, some newcomers rated the experience with employment services they accessed as not helpful due in part to language barriers, long wait times and unfriendly staff. Newcomer survey respondents were asked how their current level of employment compares to their skills and experience. About 25 percent of respondents indicated that their current level of employment is lower than their skills, and about 47 percent felt their current employment is comparatively the same or close to the same level. A few (5 percent) are employed at a higher level while 18 percent are working in jobs that are unrelated to their skills.

Newcomers encounter numerous barriers in their search for employment including lack of recognition of their skills and experience, discriminatory hiring practices, limited connections and unfamiliar job search customs.



5.2 English Language Acquisition

Language is an important pillar of successful settlement and integration and has been identified as one of the top newcomer challenges. If immigrants do not feel at ease conversing in English, they may face barriers and challenges in accessing services, finding a job and developing social connections⁶. A functional English language ability opens doors to securing employment, making friendships and community connections and being able to navigate through very different systems and cultural conventions.

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) provides basic English language training for adults at no cost through the IWC⁷. Led by a qualified instructor, participants learn practical language skills and about the local community. The highest level of English instruction funding serves only for low level service and labour employment which is insufficient for most educated newcomers seeking employment commensurate with their skill level and education.

5.3 Lack of recognition of foreign credentials

Many immigrants to Canada arrive without pre-established jobs and have to navigate the labour market upon arrival. The challenge of getting one's foreign credentials recognized and struggles with language have a direct impact on the streaming of many newcomers, into entry level or service roles despite educational background and skill level. Unfortunately, the greatest proportion of job vacancies are at lower paying service-related and labour jobs which do not require a university degree.

⁶ Wilkinson & and Bucklaschuk, Publications, 2014

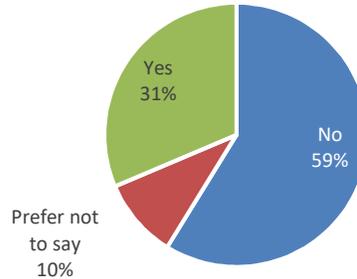
⁷ LINC classes are organized by Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels 1-12 which reflect the progression of the knowledge and skills that underlie basic, intermediate and advanced ability among adult ESL learners. The Canadian government funds the delivery of English language classes up to CLB-4 which is considered basic fluent English but with difficulty. Access to higher levels of English language instruction or job specific instruction is not funded by the federal government. Limited LINC seats are also funded by the provincial government.

5.4 Racism and Discrimination

5.4.1 Newcomers Experience with Discrimination

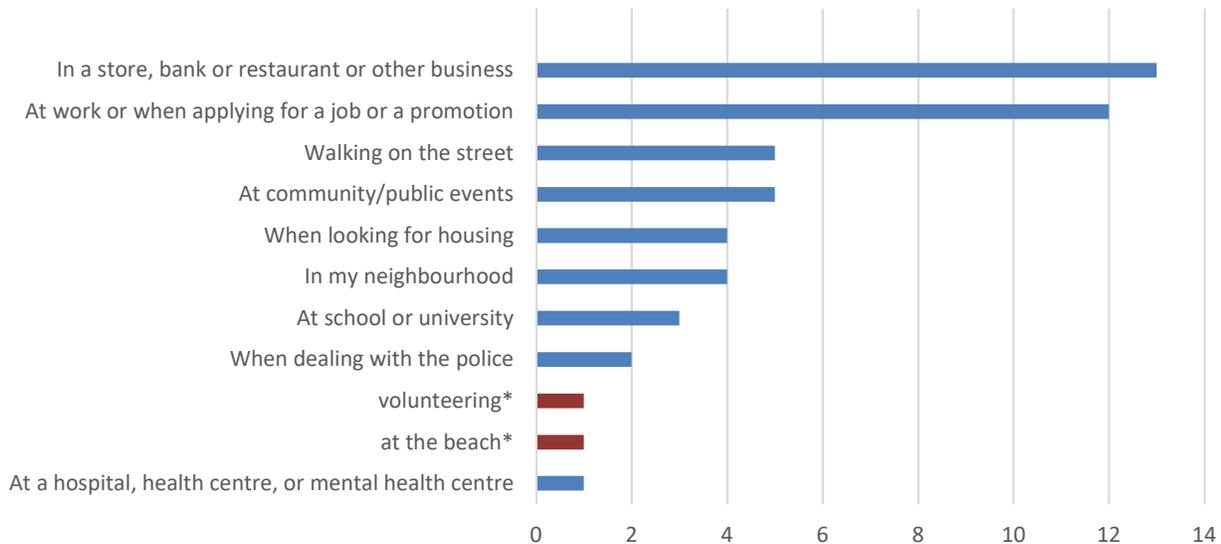
While the majority of survey respondents did not experience racism or discrimination in the community, sadly, 31 percent of newcomer respondents indicated they experienced some form of discrimination from other community residents. These occurrences took place mostly while going about the daily activities of shopping, eating out, or conducting business in the communities but also at work or looking for work. Several focus group participants echo these occurrences. Most respondents chose to ignore the discriminatory behavior however a number of newcomers did have the courage to address the issue directly.

Experienced Discrimination in the Past 5 Years



Newcomers referred to the differences in their accents, race, color or cultures as the main causes of discrimination. This lack of acceptance from within the community creates a barrier for newcomers to develop a sense of belonging to the community and is difficult for newcomers to overcome.

Experienced Discrimination (N=51)



*Respondent "other" response

The majority of participants that experienced discrimination from others in the community chose to ignore it or were afraid to confront the situation. Several participants reported that they did try to express their concern with the person involved resulting in greater understanding of the newcomers' position. Only one incident occurred in which the person refused to listen to the respondent.

5.5 Other Barriers to Employment

{Daycare was so hard – have been trying for a year and still cannot find daycare for my son. I might have to resign from my job because no childcare.} Focus Group Participant

Two key issues identified related to job search, were the challenges associated with foreign credential recognition and English language proficiency. Other issues, such as, public transportation scheduling, availability of childcare to cover work hours, lack of jobs, and potential employer discrimination were also mentioned as impacting newcomers' employment.

What We Heard

- Concerns reported were transportation, availability of childcare to cover work hours, lack of jobs, and potential employer discrimination
- For immigrant women with young children, access to quality childcare is one of the barriers that impacts their ability to work and therefore settlement outcomes
- Specific barriers that newcomer women of visible minorities often face (for example: gender- and race-based discrimination); resulting in precarious or low-income employment
- Most frequently cited barriers to economic and social inclusion newcomers experienced:
 - Lack of employment;
 - Low English language skills; and
 - Learning where and how to do things.

{Transportation is so hard – buses are so bad – they only run until 5pm so I am always stuck in the evening. I don't have car so can't get around.} Focus Group Participant

{The buses are so bad. ...and I was taking bus one hour before my time to work. Then I just sit there for one hour because I am one hour early.} Focus Group Participant

{Public transportation could be improved. It is so hard to move around} Focus Group Participant

5.6 How Can the Community Better Help Newcomers?

Newcomers were asked what can the community do to better help you with your settlement journey? They responded with job related assistance, language acquisition opportunities, better information, affordable housing availability and overall community acceptance.

5.6.1 Newcomer Needs for Better Support

Actions to make it easier to use foreign qualifications/experience in the workforce	41
More affordable housing options	40
More opportunities to help improve English skills	35
More or better programs for immigrants and refugees to find work	27
Educate employers on the value and ways of hiring and retaining immigrants and refugees	22
Actions to reduce racism and discrimination towards immigrants and refugees	18
Better connections/Networking opportunities with potential employers	18
Actions to improve the social connections of immigrants and refugees with others	16
Actions to increase welcoming and acceptance of immigrants and refugees	13
A central location where immigrants and refugees can receive many settlement and other services in one place	12
Better coordination/collaboration between service agencies	11
More effort by community services to better serve immigrants and refugees	11
More access to interpretation and translation	8
Assistance with acquiring permanent residency status	1

5.7 Voices in the Community

{Helping people find work is essential and should be on the top of the list for any new immigrants and refugees. Work will help people adjust and learn about the culture of the country by being around people other than their family members.} Resident Survey Respondent

{I have spoken to people in the community and they do experience racism. Perhaps teaching children in school that we are all equal, regardless of color, religious beliefs or a victim of poverty. Everyone deserves the right to grow and succeed in life}. Resident Survey Respondent

{I ask the community to cooperate with churches and other organizations to integrate resources and jointly help new immigrants.} Resident Survey Respondent

{I have noticed a huge difference between my experience as a white, British woman and other immigrants I meet who are either POC, or for whom English is not their first language. I would really like to see resources given to help change this and to help improve their experience. Thank you for all the work you do!} Newcomer Survey Respondent

{Someone to meet them at the airport and assist them through the first 1-2 weeks of adjusting and finding housing transport etc.} Resident Survey Respondent



{Regular chat gatherings are similar to the men's English club in the adult learning center. Because there are no teachers, this club has ceased operation. If the immigration welcome center can try this way of learning and communication, we are interested in participating in such an exchange.} Resident Survey Respondent

{Teach people how to speak and don't stare at people for her color skin!!} Resident Survey Respondent

{I think It can be improved by sharing proper knowledge about the services that can be accessed, to be able to find jobs that matched the skills level. Also, as a mother if I can get knowledge about services related to children} Newcomer Survey Respondent

Summary of Newcomer Needs

- More Social connection opportunities
- Better Information and collaboration between agencies
- Greater community acceptance of newcomers
- Better community services for immigrants
- More English learning opportunities
- Help finding a job
- Help finding affordable housing
- Better public transportation
- More access to childcare

6 Community Resident Survey

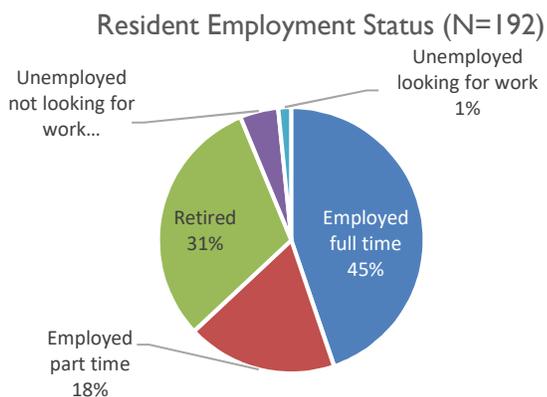
The community resident survey was distributed to the general population and immigrants who have been residents in Canada for over five years. A total of 203 residents drawn from the Campbell River and Courtenay regions, submitted replies to the online survey.



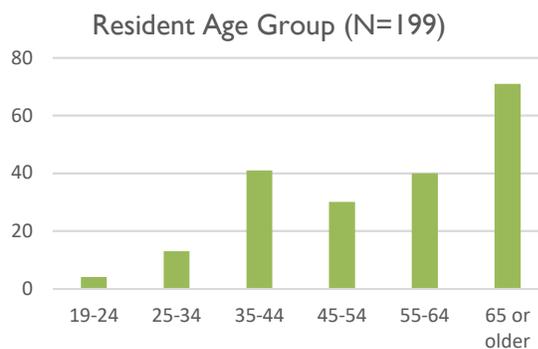
6.1 What we know about Community Residents who responded to this survey

- 75 percent are female and 68 percent of these have post-secondary education
- 55 percent Canadian born, 45 percent settled immigrant

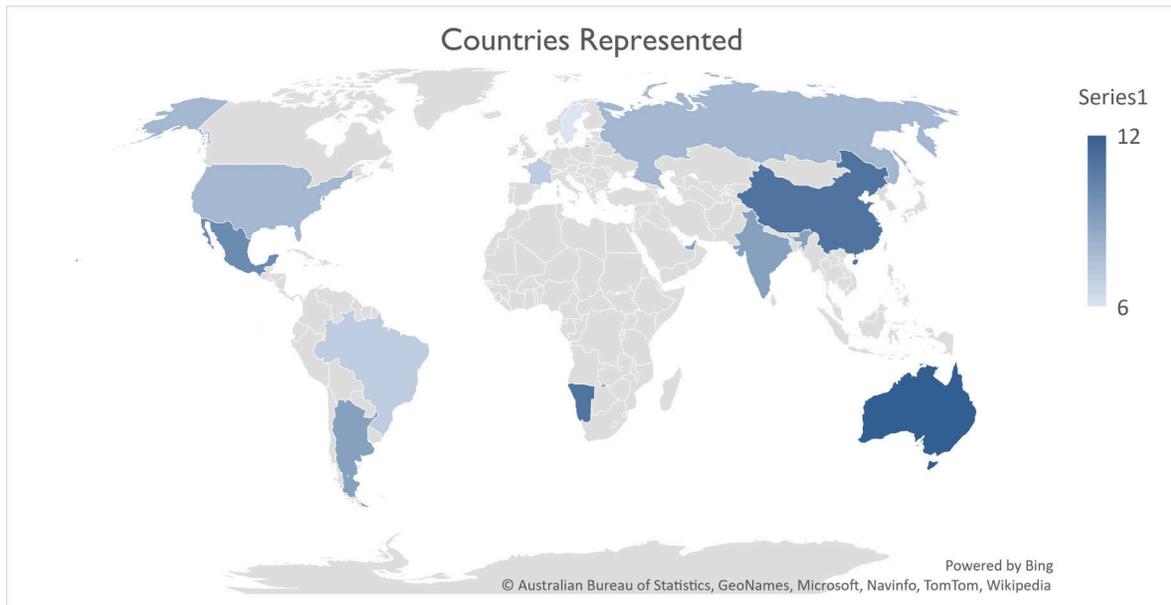
6.1.1 Employment Status



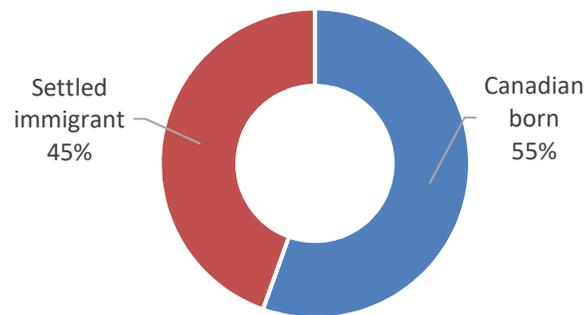
6.1.2 Resident Age Distribution



6.1.3 Countries and Ethnicities Represented

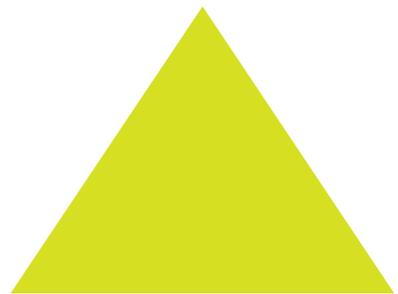
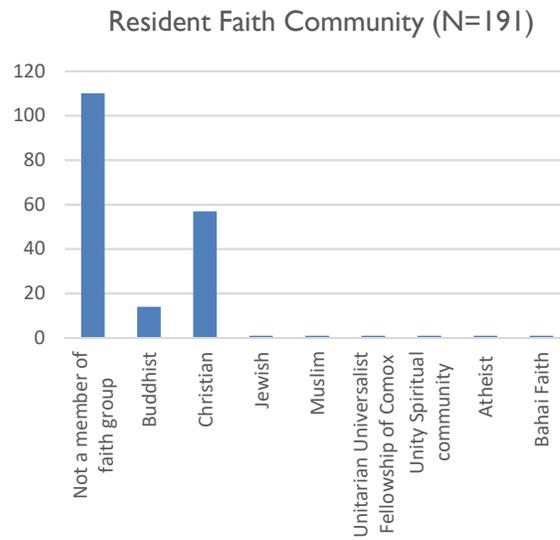


Residency Status (N=202)



Resident survey respondents were nearly evenly divided with 100 survey participants residing in Campbell River and 98 Comox Valley.

6.1.4 Member of Faith Community



7 Resident Perceptions of Immigration

7.1 Does Immigration Have a Positive Impact?

The majority of respondents agree that immigration has a positive influence on the city and recognize the many positive contributions that immigrants bring to their community. A small minority of respondents disagree that immigrants have a positive impact on the city, suggesting, there is room for greater community understanding of the positive impacts that immigrants contribute to a community. No apparent correlation was found between resident response location, age group, or education level.

What We Heard

“Immigration has a positive impact on our city”

- 87 percent strongly agree or agree with this statement
- 6 percent strongly disagree or disagree with this statement
- 7 percent had no opinion

Those that agreed believe:

Immigration contributes to arts and culture in Canada	78%
Immigration contributes to innovation	63%
Immigration encourages diversity in the community	88%
Immigration fuels economic growth	73%
Immigration helps with population growth that the aging population and low birth rate cause	59%
Immigration increases quality of life and vibrancy in the community	69%

7.1.1 Reasons Given for Disagreement

Those respondents that disagreed with the statement that “*Immigration has a positive impact on our city*”. Most frequently cited there are not enough supports available for settlement and integration of immigrants.

There is not enough supports available for settlement and integration of immigrants	17
Immigration conflicts with Canadian values	9
Immigration changes Canadian values	7
Immigration puts pressure on public services	6
Immigrants take jobs from Canadians	5
Too many immigrants are coming into the country	5

What We Heard

Community Residents Survey

- Overall, the opinions of residents toward immigration remain positive
- Those residents that expressed a negative opinion felt that newcomers needed more support for successful settlement and integration
- A minority of residents believe that immigrants take jobs from Canadians, impact Canadian values and put pressure on limited public services

{Newcomers face significant barriers to success and are falling behind their non-immigrant counterparts. Welcoming communities, able to provide adequate housing, accessible transit, employment, language and cultural supports and services are essential to providing every opportunity for newcomers to succeed.}

Welcoming Communities: A toolkit for local governments, Federation of Canadian Municipalities

7.1.2 How welcoming is our community towards immigrants?

- 86% believe their community is somewhat or very welcoming
- 9 % believe it is not welcoming
- 4 % have no opinion

7.1.3 Our community has a reputation of being open and welcoming for international immigrants and refugees.

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
54%	34%	12%

7.1.4 Our community does enough to support immigrants and refugees.

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
23%	38.5%	38.5%

7.1.5 What does the community need more of for settlement and integration of newcomers?

(N=203)	Per Cent
More support for language learning and employment for immigrants and refugees	65.02
More community initiatives to welcome and integrate immigrants and refugees	59.61
More municipal government engagement in welcoming and integrating immigrants and refugees	52.71
More targeted and culturally appropriate programming for immigrants and refugees	50.25
More funding for settlement or other relevant community programs and services	49.75
More support for arts and cultural contributions of immigrants and refugees	44.33

Community residents are strongly (65 percent) in agreement with the newcomers' survey that more support for language learning and employment is needed for successful settlement and integration of immigrants to the community.

What We
Heard

- Residents and newcomer survey respondents agreed that more support for language learning and employment should be a priority
- More community-based initiatives to make newcomers feel more welcome
- More municipal and community engagement to welcome and integrate immigrants
- More funding for settlement and culturally relevant community programs for immigrants is needed

8 Settlement and Community Service Providers

A series of interviews were conducted with organizations in Campbell River and Comox Valley that provide services to newcomers. Participants represented a wide range of stakeholders including settlement agencies, language training providers, educational institutions, grassroots organizations, RCMP, Health Services, Chamber of Commerce and community organizations.

The interview questions were sent to stakeholders in advance to allow sufficient time for organizations to comprehensively respond. This section outlines the services provided in the community, the extent of any immigrant focused programs and the barriers they encounter serving immigrants.

Comox Valley

Organization Name	Type of Organization	Population Served
Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holder	Church Based Immigrant Sponsor	Immigrant
North Island College	Post-Secondary Education	Student/General
John Howard Society	Social Service Non-Profit Agency	General
Job Shop	Work BC	General
Immigrant Welcome Centre	Community Non-Profit	Immigrant
Comox Valley Regional District	Regional Government	General
Comox Valley RCMP	Police	General
Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce	Business Association	Business Community
City of Courtenay	Municipal Government	General
Courtenay Elementary Community School Society	Community Non-Profit	Families and Children

Campbell River

Organization Name	Type of Organization	Population Served
Volunteer Campbell River	Community Volunteer Placement Non-Profit	Volunteers/General
Strathcona Regional District	Regional Government	General
Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holder	Private Immigrant Sponsor	Immigrant
John Howard Society	Social Service Non-Profit Agency	General
Immigrant Welcome Centre	Community Non-Profit	Immigrant
Family Services	Government Social Service	Families/General
City of Campbell River Recreation and Culture	Municipal Government	General
Campbell River RCMP	Police	General
Campbell River Chamber of Commerce	Business Association	Business Community
NIEFS	Work BC Centre	General

Two organizations interviewed in both Campbell River and the Comox Valley provide services and programs exclusively for the newcomer population. The majority of the organizations interviewed provide services to the general public including immigrants however most also recognize the need for welcoming targeted outreach and programming for newcomers.

The IWC provides settlement services for a very large and widely dispersed geographic area. Traditionally, it has been difficult if not impossible for some newcomers to attend English language classes available through the IWC held in Courtenay and Campbell River. Attendees must have the use of a vehicle or rely



on infrequent public transport to get there. While class times are available at various times of the day and days of the week, and child minding is available, these may not coincide with newcomers' busy schedules. They are currently offering blended virtual and in person services and are actively seeking to expand virtual offerings to reach as many clients as possible. This includes ensuring digital literacy support is available for those who need it.

{What could be done to better orientate and make recreation a more welcoming environment and service for newcomers/immigrants?} Culture/Recreation Dept. Lewis centre

The question was posed during an interview - *What can be done better to make recreation a more welcoming environment for newcomers?* The data doesn't specifically address this issue but based on the newcomer survey and focus group responses, acknowledging the challenges newcomers face is the first step to making them feel more welcome in the community.

Diversity Policies and Training

Most organizations interviewed, particularly any of the government organizations, have developed some basic policies around diversity and inclusion issues in their hiring practices and their interactions with the public. Certainly, all agree that discriminatory practices are not acceptable. Smaller and private organizations recognize the need for diversity policies however either don't have any staff yet or don't have the capacity at this time to devote to developing them. Diversity training for client facing staff has been limited to immigrant specific serving organizations and the RCMP in both jurisdictions.

{...we have extensive policies around diversity and inclusion, including in our hiring practices. Our staff participate in intercultural competence and anti-racism/discrimination training regularly. We are currently planning a training session in the Comox Valley for our staff.} RCMP

North Island College provides a comprehensive newcomer acclimating program from pre-arrival support, orientation upon arrival, community tours, assistance with accessing health insurance and other community services and social activities and a student mentor program. Employment services and job opportunities are provided on campus. While language is not normally a barrier at the college, cultural differences can be challenging. The college also offers counselling to students needing mental health support. The College has established a Diversity Matters Team which engages cross campuses and cross departments to discuss matters of diversity and the NIC team is proactively looking for training and professional development opportunities. The college served 200 international students from September 2019 to September 2020. English language skills are mandatory for student acceptance.

{it is another measure of success when we see students remain in the community after graduation rather than moving to a large city, indicating they feel a sense of belonging here.} NIC



The Comox Valley Culture/Recreation Department Lewis Centre has been providing space for numerous multi-cultural events held annually hosted by the Comox Valley Multicultural Association & Immigrant Support Society. The organization's website has a translation function into most languages however offline program information is available only in English. While the Centre is looking for ways to provide a more welcoming environment and service for newcomers to date the Centre does not provide any newcomer or culturally competent specific programming.

{Recreation has an incredible power to bring communities together by fostering a sense of community through programs, services and events. Bringing people together through our offerings and helping to build bonds with others. It allows participants to share common interests and goals and create social connections in the process. It would help newcomers feel a sense of belonging within their new community, so getting newcomers into our doors is vital.} Culture/Recreation Dept. Lewis Centre

Communication Barriers

The biggest barriers to serving newcomers and immigrants identified by all participating organizations are communication barriers and cultural understanding/ knowledge. Although the municipal websites have translation functions to overcome any language barriers for someone unfamiliar with Canadian ways of doing things, these can be very intimidating without some assistance. The IWC offers formal English classes on site (virtually during COVID-19) at levels CBL1-4 and conversational English practice sessions. The center intends to continue with a hybrid English language delivery program after COVID-19 health measures are relaxed. Because of the widely dispersed geographic area that the Centre serves, newcomers often have difficulty attending in person because they rely on public transportation.

The Courtenay Elementary Community School Society in partnership with the Courtenay Elementary School provides English language classes to the parents of children who are participating in the Strong Start program in the school. Several other multi-cultural organizations in the community had offered in-person English conversation groups for newcomers prior to COVID-19 safety measures were implemented.

{Community School Society partners with Courtenay Elementary's Strong Start program to offer newcomer parents English conversation classes right in the School building while their children attend the Strong Start program} Courtenay Elementary Community School Society

Employment support centres deliver all programs in English as do most other government agencies and organizations. Cultural diversity within the RCMP provides access to many different languages within the organization and provides translators hired through NIC when needed.

Proactive outreach to newcomers by organizations is mixed. Several very actively engage with newcomers to get the message out about what services and programs are available to them. Most however do not actively engage in community outreach activities to encourage newcomers to take



advantage of their services but wait for referrals from other agencies or for the newcomer to walk through the door.

{Barriers have been reduced by participating in a Thanksgiving potluck dinner, and going to family celebrations which are opportunities to get to know each other}
Courtenay Elementary Community School Society

Most organizations make a point of collaboration and partnerships with other service providers, some more actively than others, and will refer newcomers to the organization that can help them, if they are aware of it.

All organizations expressed an interest in learning how they can better serve newcomers to the community.

9 Recommendations: How Can the Community Better Help Newcomers?

Earlier in this report newcomers were asked what they need to make their settlement and integration journey in this new world better for them. The following recommendations are based on what we have heard and learned from them.

9.1 Access: Make it Easy for Newcomers to Find What they need

- Provision of accurate and accessible materials to newcomers is especially important
- Encourage training service providers to have the knowledge about all supports available to immigrants and newcomers and where to find them
- Develop community champions who promote the value of newcomers to the community to help break down barriers
- Develop an app for the Comox and Campbell River regions “Where do I find....?” which maps the locations and can translate
- Build collaborative networks to better connect information and services to newcomers

{... would be valuable to explore how the IWC and other agencies can better support people/groups that are supporting newcomers. How to support the supporters.}

Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holder

- Expand English language education and conversation groups to locations closer to home – the library may be a great central location to start one, or possibly the recreation centers

9.2 Cultivate Community Belonging and Learning

- Establish a community-based organization that champions the concepts of a welcoming community to the community
- Creation of a public awareness campaign to promote the benefits of immigration and multiculturalism to the community through events, promotions, and incentives (the community passport concept is a good opportunity to promote local business to newcomers and for newcomers to engage with the community on a personal level)
- Promote multi-cultural community activities (food is a great place to start) to encourage cross-cultural understanding and opportunities for sharing
- Help people in the community develop a cultural awareness to see things from an immigrant’s perspective, put yourself in their shoes and walk with them on their journey to hear their stories
- Promote community education regarding racism towards newcomers

9.3 Promote Meaningful Employment Opportunities

- Develop strategies aiding newcomers in improving job readiness and securing employment
- Encourage the business community and employers to introduce incentives for mentoring onboarding programs and supporting occupation-specific language training
- Establish a database of immigrant friendly employers and employment opportunities

9.4 Breaking Down Community Barriers

- Many newcomers don't have access to a personal vehicle and must rely on public transportation systems to get to work and school. Improvement of public transportation service frequency and service hours would go a long way to improving the lives of newcomers.
- Encourage municipal and regional governments to increase affordable rental housing development for newcomers. Lack of affordable housing affects everyone in the community but particularly newcomers on low incomes.
- Affordable and reliable childcare is especially important to low income families that rely on both parents being able to work. Women particularly are affected by the lack of childcare in the community.

Being a welcoming community means focusing on creating connections between newcomers and established community members. This can help in eliminating barriers to social and economic integration and addressing racism and discrimination.

Definition of Terms Used in this Report

Census - The population Census of Canada, which is taken at five-year intervals and counts persons and households and a wide variety of characteristics to provide a statistical portrait of the country.

Discrimination - The practice or act of making distinctions between people on the basis of prejudicial attitudes and beliefs, which leads to the inequitable treatment of individuals or groups.

Diversity - The variety of characteristics that distinguish people as individuals and that identify them as belonging to a group or groups. Diversity is a concept that includes notions of age, class, culture, ability, ethnicity, family, sex, language, place of origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation, as well as other characteristics that vary among people and groups within society.

Ethnicity - Ethnicity is a social and political construct used by individuals and communities to define themselves and others. Specifically, “ethnicity” refers to a person's cultural background, including his or her language, origin, faith and heritage. Ethnicity comprises the ideas, values and behaviours that are transmitted from one generation to the next. It tends to be perceived in terms of common culture, history, language or nationhood. Ethnic identity and ethnicity are interchangeable terms.

Foreign Worker / Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) - A person who enters Canada on a temporary basis to work, and who has been issued a work permit.

Immigrant - A person who was born outside of Canada and has been granted permanent resident status by Canada or is a Naturalized Canadian Citizen who has settlement and adaptation needs. Includes persons who are, or who have ever been, landed immigrants. In government data such as census figures refer to all foreign-born persons who have become permanent residents of Canada, whether they arrived as immigrants, refugees, or refugee claimants.

Naturalized Canadian Citizen - A person who acquired Canadian citizenship via the naturalization process.

Newcomer - Someone who is newly arrived, learning about and navigating one or more of Canada’s social, cultural, civic and economic systems.

Permanent Resident - An immigrant who has been granted permanent residence status by the Government of Canada, and who is not yet a Canadian citizen.

Racism - A set of mistaken assumptions, opinions and actions both negative and positive resulting from the belief that one group of people categorized by colour or ancestry is inherently superior to another. Racism may be present in organizational and institutional policies, programs and practices, as well as in the attitudes and behaviour of individuals.



Refugees landed in Canada - Immigrants who have had their refugee claims accepted and who subsequently applied for and were granted permanent resident status in Canada.

Skilled Worker Class - An immigrant selected for his / her ability to participate in the labour market and to establish himself / herself economically in Canada.

Temporary Resident - A person who is lawfully in Canada on a temporary basis under the authority of a valid document (i.e., a work permit, study permit, temporary resident permit or a visitor record) issued for the purpose of entering Canada, and an individual who seeks asylum upon or after arrival in Canada and remains in the country pending completion of processes relative to their claim.

Total population - The total population counts in private households of a specific geographic area, regardless of immigration status.

For additional Settlement related definitions, visit the Government of Canada Citizenship and Immigration website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/glossary.asp>

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