



SOUTH OKANAGAN  
IMMIGRANT AND  
COMMUNITY SERVICES



# South Okanagan-Similkameen Newcomer Inclusion Strategy 2020-2025



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*We acknowledge that we live, work and play on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Syilx People of the Okanagan Nation, and we are grateful to be here.*

## INTRODUCTION

A Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is a mechanism through which the federal government (IRCC) supports the development of community-based partnerships and planning around the needs of newcomers. LIPs seek to engage various stakeholders in a locally driven strategic planning process including employers, school boards, health centres, government, ethnocultural and faith-based organizations, and the community and social services sectors. There are 19 LIPs in BC and 76 across the country.

### **LIP Objectives:**

- Support better coordination in the planning and delivery of integration services across multiple sectors;
- Provide a framework to facilitate collaboration and develop & implement community-based strategic plans;
- Strengthen local integration capacity to foster labour market access, social inclusion, and sustainable welcoming communities;
- Achieve improved outcomes as indicated by increased economic, social, political and civic participation by newcomers.

### **South Okanagan Local Immigration Partnership (SOSLIP)**

The SOSLIP was created in 2014 and has around 50 members - representatives of municipalities, chambers of commerce, community agencies, school boards, businesses, health service providers and newcomers.

### **Strategic Directions 2014-2019:**

- Increase the availability of, accessibility to, and relevance of, language training;
- Support newcomers to develop ad/or apply their knowledge, skills and abilities to match the region's work opportunities;
- Ensure employers have the knowledge, skills and ability to find, hire and retain newcomers.

## **Key Milestones**

- Research: situation analysis and community needs assessment;
- Established a Council (guiding principles, meetings) and workgroups;
- Created a Strategic Plan;
- Carried out projects (e.g. Welcoming Communities, Connect 2017, Connect 2018, Community Champions, Fast Track, Toastmaster's Speech Craft, Familiarization Tours);
- Organized several employer capacity development initiatives focusing on diversity and inclusion – workshops, presentations, resource sharing, HR workgroup;
- Developed a Welcome Guide for newcomers in the region.

## **Strategy Review Rationale**

It has been over five years since the SOSLIP Strategic Plan was developed. Therefore, it was important to review the Strategy to ensure that the strategic directions identified by the partnership are still relevant and responsive to the current needs.

# STRATEGY REVIEW APPROACH

## Co-discovery

We identified two major groups that we needed to consult with to ensure that our partnership continues to be on track – newcomers and employers. We used the following methods to collect information: surveys, virtual conversation circles with the groups of newcomers, observation and desk research.

Newcomer research questions were structured in a way to help us learn what attracted newcomers to the region, what challenges they faced upon arrival and currently, what their strengths and dreams were, how connected they felt to Canada and the local community, and what contributed to the feeling of belonging for them.

The employer research questions focused on identifying employers' hiring needs, key job functions and qualifications necessary for the jobs, main challenges in hiring and retaining employees, as well as their openness and readiness for hiring newcomers.

We also reviewed current demographics data, labour market trends and changes in immigration.

The knowledge that we gained through the process of discovery and analysis of hard data and anecdotal evidence helped us identify current challenges.

## Co-creation

Once the information was collected and analyzed, we developed a list of challenges and identified key strategies in addressing them through consultations with newcomers and settlement service providers.

Using the Project Canvas Model, we refined the project scope, success criteria, milestones, actions, results, resources, constraints and risks.

## Co-implementation

Using the SOSLIP Project Canvas the partnership will develop an Action Plan that would include key activities, implementation methods/mechanisms, milestones, performance measurement processes and tools, and member responsibilities. The Action Plan will be used to develop annual work plans.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON IMMIGRATION

## World Migration

*Adopted from the World Migration Report 2020, IOM UN Migration*

- The number of international migrants globally in 2019: 272 million (3.5% of the world's population);
- 74% of all international migrants were of working age (20–64 years);
- The global refugee population was 25.9 million in 2018;
- 52% of the global refugee population was under 18 years of age;
- The number of internally displaced persons due to violence and conflict reached 41.3 million;
- The number of stateless persons globally in 2018 was 3.9 million.

## Federal and Provincial Immigration Plans: the Impact of COVID-19

There are several Federal and Provincial immigration programs. Federal programs include: “Express Entry” - Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) & Canadian Experience Class (CEC), Federal Skilled Trades Program, and Global Talent Stream. British Columbia has a BC Provincial Nominee Program (BCPNP) that includes several streams – Skilled Immigration, Express Entry BC, and Entrepreneur Immigration. To learn more about these programs and various options for employers, please see the Employer Toolkit developed by the South Okanagan-Similkameen Local Immigration Partnership (SOSLIP): <http://www.soics.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Employer-Toolkit-final-draft.pdf>

On March 12th, 2020 the federal government released its 2020-2022 Immigration Levels Plan, increasing the number of new permanent residents by 10,000 each year from 2020 to 2022. It was anticipated that Canada would welcome 341,000 new permanent residents in 2020, 351,000 in 2021, and 361,000 in 2022. According to the RBC research in August 2020, if we get 70% of 341,000 in 2020 it will be the most optimistic scenario. The Conference Board of Canada argues that if Canada stopped all immigration from 2017 to 2040, our population would shrink by over two million and the GDP growth rate will drop from 2.9 to just 1.1 percent.

COVID-19 does not distinguish between immigration statuses, but deeply embedded societal discrimination and structural inequalities mean that the pandemic has had a disproportionately negative effect on immigrants, women, visible minorities, and the poor.

As the pandemic hit, the unemployment rate increased for everyone, but much more so for recent immigrants, peaking in April at 17.3% compared to 13.5% for the Canadian born and long-term immigrants. According to the recent research by Ryerson University, “immigrants face greater risks of COVID-19 because of the types of jobs they work in, many rely on public transit, and they often reside in overcrowded housing... [Boarder closure and oher restrictions] have gone much further, in many cases becoming xenophobic nationalist reactions to ‘the dangerous other’ with calls for more securitization of migration.” (John Shields & Zainab Abu Alrob (Ryerson University, July 2020).

During the pandemic we have been seeing increased cases of racism and hate crime. Only in Vancouver the number of cases increased to 29 in May 2020 compared to 4 in 2019. Statistics Canada reported in July that immigrants (29%) were almost twice as likely as the Canadian-born (17%) to report that they were afraid of being stigmatized, mostly because of racial identity. The structural realities of labour migration systems and increased racism towards migrant workers make them particularly vulnerable and become a public health threat.

### Why is Immigration Important?

“In 2019, Canada’s population grew by about 580,000 people (or 1.6%), with immigrants accounting for more than 80% of the increase. While more than 30% of the overall population is at least 55, only 8% of immigrants are. Indeed, almost two-thirds of immigrants are in the prime working ages between 25 and 54” (RBC Economics).

A lot has been said about labour market shortages in Canada and British Columbia. According to the Conference Board of Canada report (2016), the shortage of workers could cost BC close to \$7.9 billion in GDP annually. Over the coming years, 70% of job openings will be due to retirement. BC will have 903,000 job openings by 2027 and 77% of these jobs will require post secondary education (<https://www.welcomebc.ca/Choose-B-C/Why-Choose-British-Columbia-Canada/B-C-Labour-Market-Outlook>)

In addition, Canada’s labour market relies on temporary foreign workers in specific industries, such as agriculture (27%), private household services (10%) and gasoline stations (8%). Over 10% of businesses employ at least one temporary foreign worker. (“The distribution of temporary foreign workers across industries in Canada”, Yuqian Lu).

The ageing population and low birth rates mean that employers need to look for immigrants to fill vacancies at all levels. Canada’s worker-to-retiree ratio is 4 to 1. By 2035, when 5 million Canadians are set to retire, the ratio will be down to 2 to 1, meaning there will be only 2 workers for every retiree.

Canada welcomes around 300, 000 immigrants a year with about 40, 000 coming to British Columbia. Only a small fraction (less than 1,000 in five years) comes to the South Okanagan-Similkameen. The majority of newcomers are skilled immigrants that bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their workplaces and contribute to the development of local communities. They can help businesses access new customers and international markets, enrich organizational culture and spark innovation. A study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology showed that racially diverse teams outperform homogenous by 35%. Boston Consulting Group found that diverse management teams report 19% higher revenues due to innovation.

It's not a secret that most newcomers to Canada settle in three large cities – Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. However, the number of immigrants settling in small and midsize communities is growing. In 2017 it was almost 4 in 10.

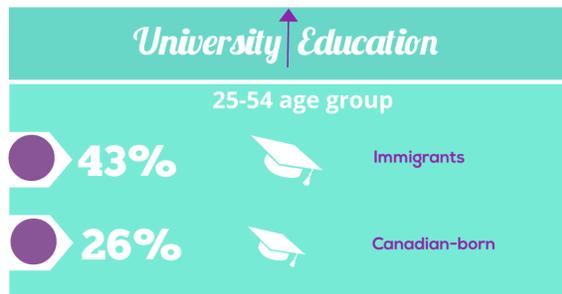
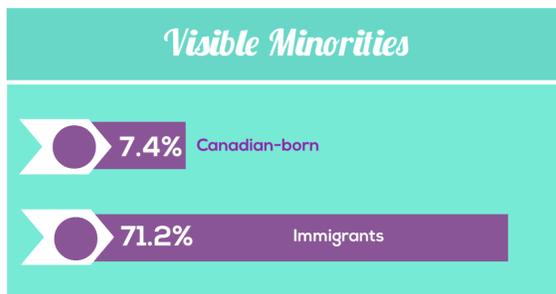
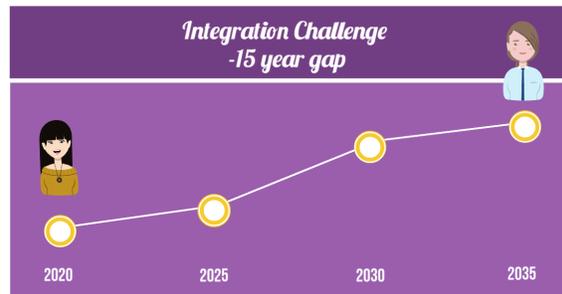
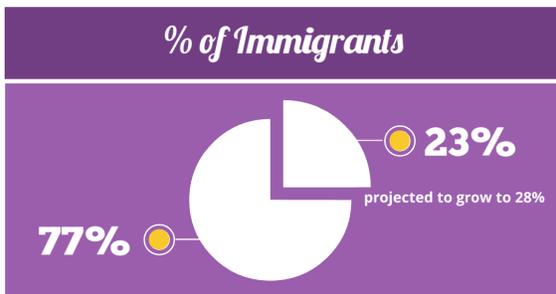
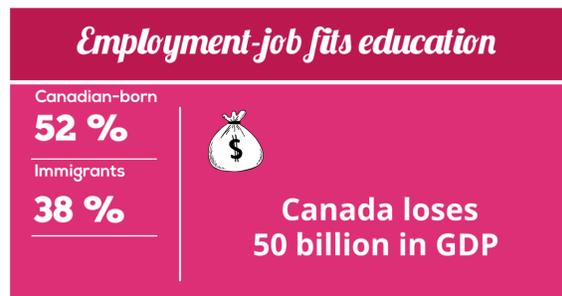
Meaningful labour market participation is one of the most important things for newcomers. To prepare for employment and entrepreneurship opportunities newcomers need supports in language learning, understanding workplace culture, navigating local systems and building networks. But, being away from their homelands, newcomers are not just looking for economic opportunities, they are looking for emotional comfort, a sense of belonging. Large cities have enough immigrant populations to create the temporary comfort zones for newcomers – opportunity to speak their native languages, communicate with people that share their culture, buy familiar food. Smaller communities cannot offer that but we can create a more welcoming and inclusive community where everyone feels that they belong.

# INTEGRATION CHALLENGE

Studies show that it may take up to 15 years for immigrants to reach the level of Canadian-born residents in terms of earnings, civic participation and sense of belonging.

Besides picking the top professionals in terms of education and experience, Canada thoroughly screens immigrants to make sure they did not commit serious crimes and are in good health. Immigrants contribute to the economy by working, creating jobs through entrepreneurship, sending Canadian goods to their home countries, purchasing goods and services. They also try hard to become a part of society by volunteering and joining clubs. According to the 2016 Census, one-third of immigrants are volunteers and two-thirds are members of social organizations. When immigrants apply for citizenship they must take a citizenship test that makes sure that new Canadians have a substantial knowledge about Canada's history and culture, as well as the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. About 85% of newcomers become citizens.

## Immigrant vs Canadian-Born



The Canadian Index for Measuring Integration (CIMI) uses four key dimensions to measure immigrant integration: economic, social, civic & democratic participation and health. They use a 1-10 ranking system where 1 indicates the smallest gap between Canadian-born and immigrants and 10- the biggest gap. The smaller the gap, the better the region performs relative to the rest of Canada. The following socio-demographic characteristics have been accounted for: age, sex, language, education, occupation, full-time work, visible minority and mobility status.

Using the 2011-16 data, British Columbia ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in the economic dimension that includes labour market participation (e.g. full-time employment) and in health (e.g. regular medical doctor, satisfaction with life, self perceived life stress and unmet health care needs).

The province is doing well in the area of social & democratic participation showing a lower gap (rank 2) in immigrant volunteering, voting and involvement in organizations.

However, British Columbia has a score of 9 in the social dimension that includes friends, a sense of belonging, being a victim of discrimination with the “sense of belonging to the province” score of 10 – the lowest score/ the biggest gap.

This data shows that we need to do much more in the economic dimension and need to have an immediate strategy to respond to the biggest gap in the area of building immigrants’ sense of belonging. Our Partnership decided to test this assumption at the local level.

# SOUTH OKANAGAN – SIMILKAMEEN COMMUNITY PROFILE & SERVICE NEEDS

## Approach & Methodology

- Literature review;
- Service Mapping;
- Employer survey;
- Newcomer survey – SOICS clients and general immigrant population;
- Consultations – three focus groups.

## Demographics

The South Okanagan-Similkameen region is a mixed urban-rural area in the South Okanagan Valley. The geography of the region poses a lot of opportunities for socio-economic development, especially, in the agricultural sector, tourism and small business development. It also comes with some limitations that are characteristic for small remote communities, such as lack of public transportation, lower wages and limited career opportunities.

According to the Census data, the population of the region was 83,022 in 2016. Approximately 30% of the population are residents over 65 years old. Over 14% of the population (11,930) are immigrants. The majority of the immigrant population arrived over ten years ago. Below is the table with the breakdown for major towns and villages in the region.

City	Population 2016	Immigrants	Recent Immigrants 2011-2016	Non-Permanent Residents*	% Immigrant & Non-PR
Summerland	11,615	1,400	65	50	12%
Penticton	43,432	5,715	425	130	13.4%
Oliver	4,928	840	65	10	17.2%
Keremeos	1,502	195	0	15	13.9%
Princeton	2,828	205	10	0	7.2%
Osoyoos	5,085	975	50	30	19.7%
Okanagan Falls	2,230	200	10	0	8.9%
Naramata	1,676	335	0	0	19.9%

*\*Includes persons with work/study permit and refugee claimants, and their family members sharing the same permit and living in Canada with them.*



## Labour Market

The City of Penticton conducted a regional labour market research involving 135 employers in 2016. Among other things, the research found that the majority of local businesses had been struggling with recruitment and retention of skilled labour, and the existing labour supply did not meet the demand.

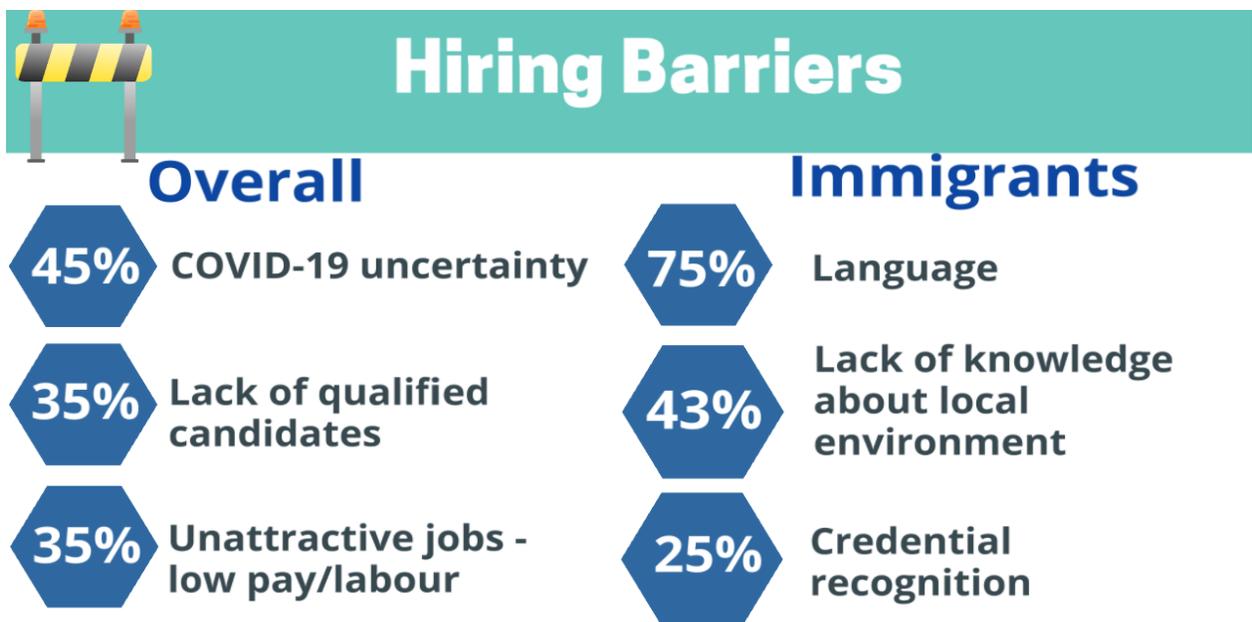
Among other challenges impacting the talent deficit were:

- Lower wages affecting the region's ability to attract skilled employees from other areas;
- Cost of living;
- Lack of affordable housing;
- Community receptiveness to newcomers;
- Seasonal work;
- Difficulty finding appropriate employment by spouses of the potential new hires attracted from other regions.

Among the top occupation groups in high demand were sales and service occupations (26%), trades, transport and equipment operators (23%), management and business administration (23%).

## Employer Survey Results

The survey was distributed via the Local Immigration Partnership network and local Chambers of Commerce, and generated 21 responses. Below are the key findings. Please refer to the Attachments for the survey questions.



# Newcomer Hiring



Do not employ newcomers



71%

To help with settlement  
For Inter-cultural exchange  
Because of commitment & hard work



29%

Over 90% want to learn more!

## What do employers value?



Teamwork



Problem solving



Technical skills



## Community Services

While developing a Welcome Guide for newcomers to the region, we conducted a service mapping. We discovered hundreds of community services in the region, including employment supports, physical and mental health services, housing supports, services for specific groups (women, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, individuals with low-income). There are a number of services that support small business development, recreation and arts. We have over 100 faith groups in the region.

The following service gaps were identified:

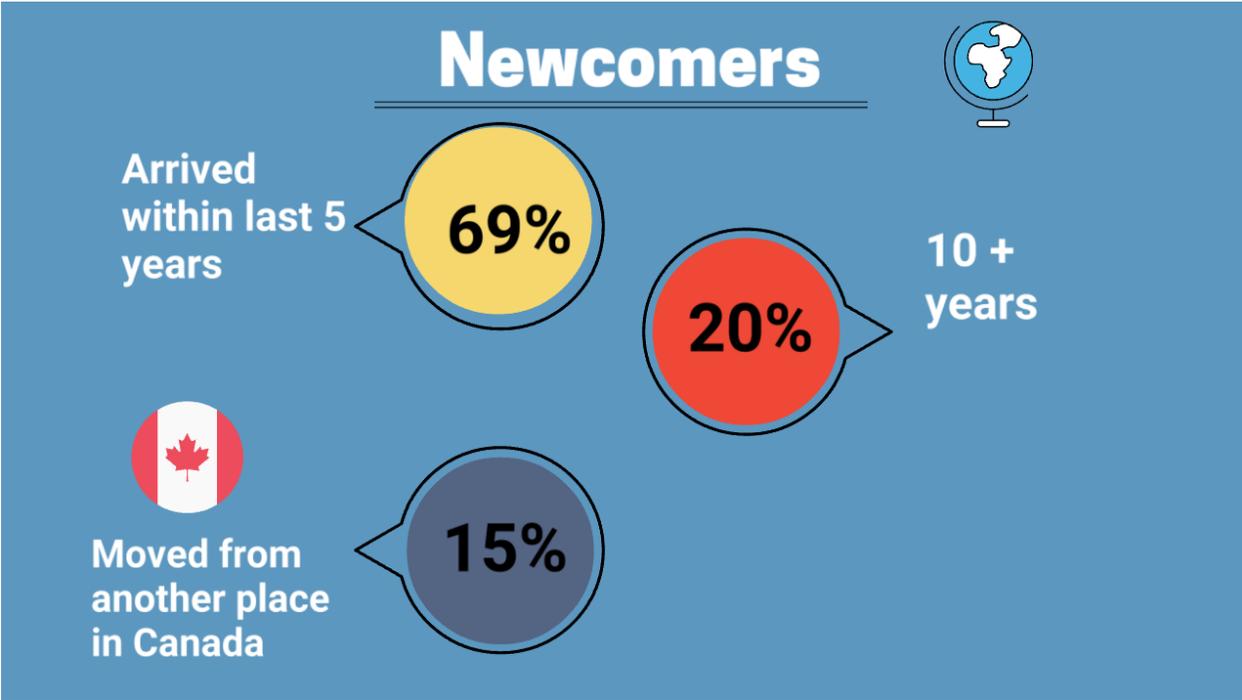
- Although there is a number of employment support services, there are no paid internship opportunities or job shadowing that could help newcomers get a foot in the door.
- Due to the lack of family physicians in the region the only option to find a family doctor is via the online waitlist – patient attachment list. Although this service helps newcomers to the region find a doctor, it does not offer an opportunity to select their doctor based on recommendations from friends and family and/or religious requirements (e.g. female vs. male doctor).
- Limited public transportation and absence of affordable alternatives (Uber, Lyft, car-share) lead to a limited access to employment, health, education and other opportunities for vulnerable groups, such as newcomers.
- The majority of rental housing owners set access limitations, such as age and pet ownership. For newcomers, there is an additional barrier - the requirement to provide references, which are not available if you just moved to Canada.
- 99% of the faith groups in the region are Christian; there are two Hindu temples, one mosque (a gathering place), one Baha'i group and no synagogues.
- There is a lack of ethno-specific grocery stores and very limited stock of international food items in chain grocery stores.
- The region's recreation and sports facilities are not accessible for people with all religious backgrounds. E.g. there are no women/girls or men/boys only programs.

## Newcomer Assets & Needs

To assess newcomer assets and needs we used surveys and focus groups. We have developed two types of surveys – a shorter version for current clients of the South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services (SOICS) and a longer version for immigrants who have not used the SOICS' services yet. The survey link was e-mailed and sent via text message to over 400 people. We have also printed the survey information on labels that were placed on sanitizing packets. The baskets with the sanitizing packets were placed at ethnic local businesses – stores and restaurants.

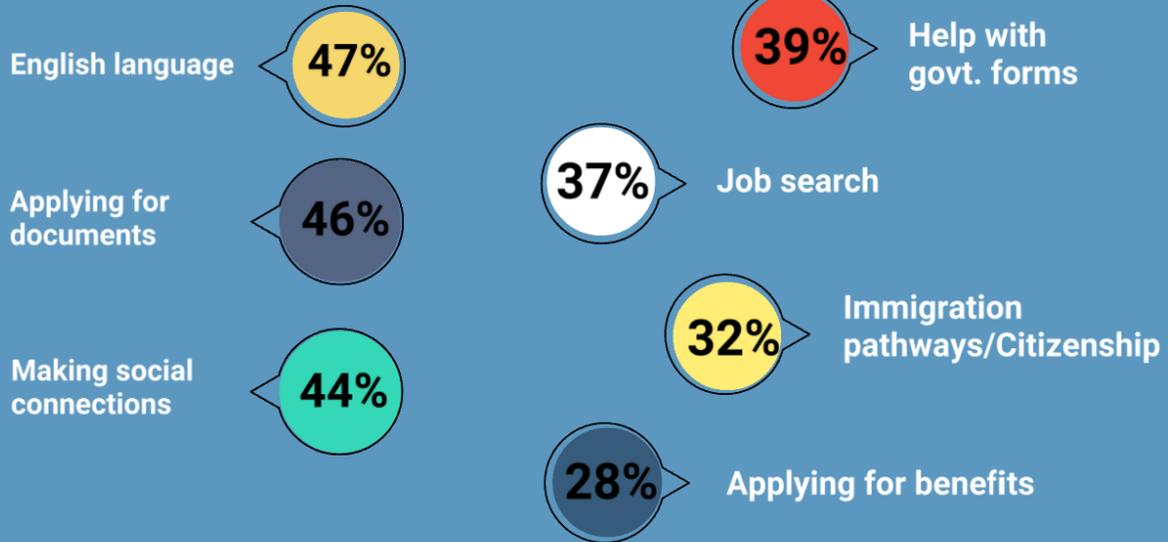
In developing the survey questions, we used the extensive study conducted in 2018 in the United States: “Multidimensional Measure of Immigrant Integration” by Niklas Harder, Lucila Figueroa, Rachel Gillum, Dominik Hangartner, David D. Laitin and Jens Hainmueller. This study proposes a survey-based measure that identifies six dimensions of integration - psychological, economic, political, social, linguistic, and navigational. We have also asked direct questions about what makes newcomers resilient and what helps them feel that they belong here. Please refer to the Attachments for the survey and focus group questions.

151 newcomers participated in the survey and 13 were involved in two focus group discussions. Below are some key findings.

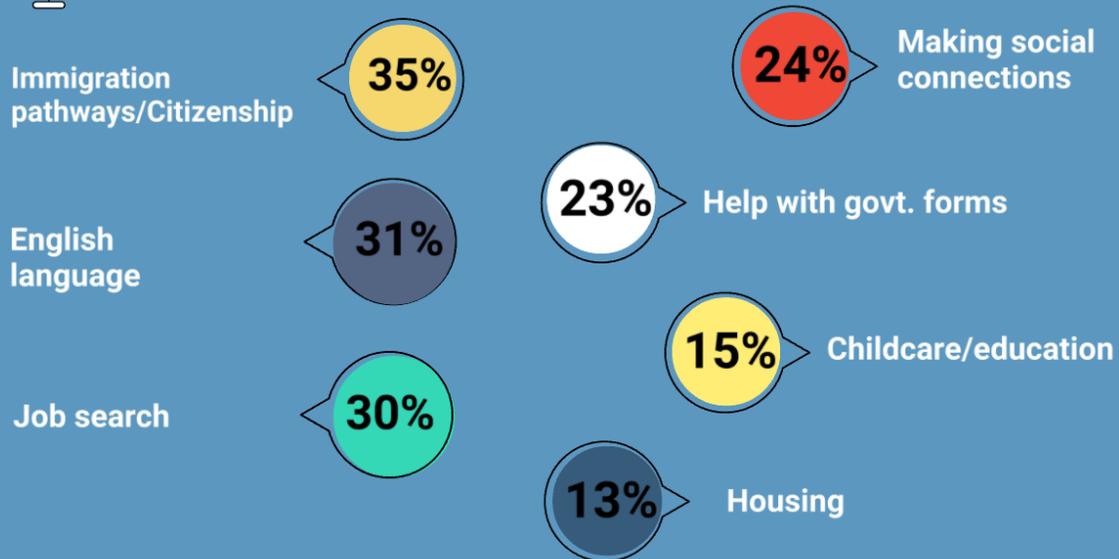




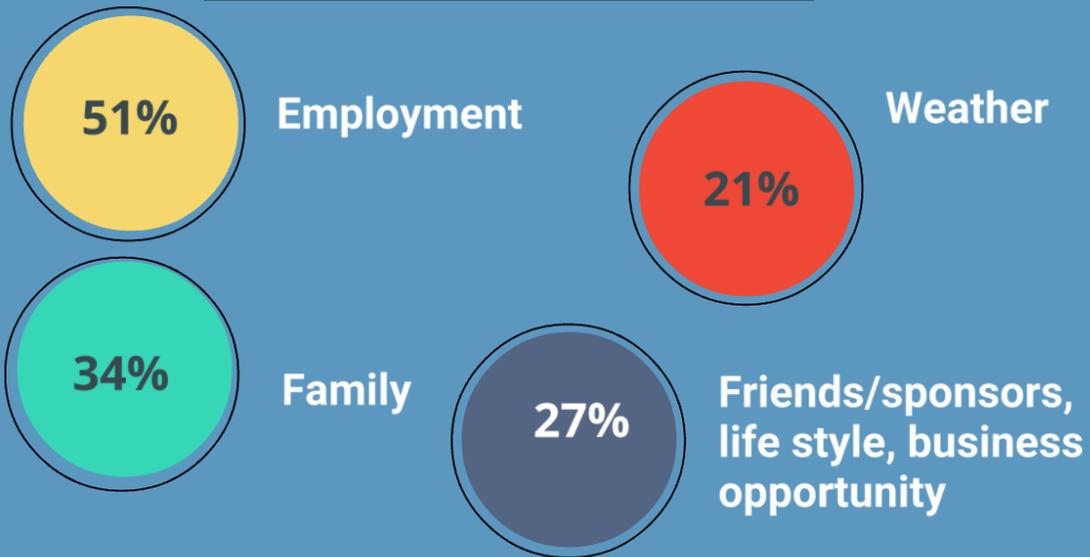
## Needs at Arrival



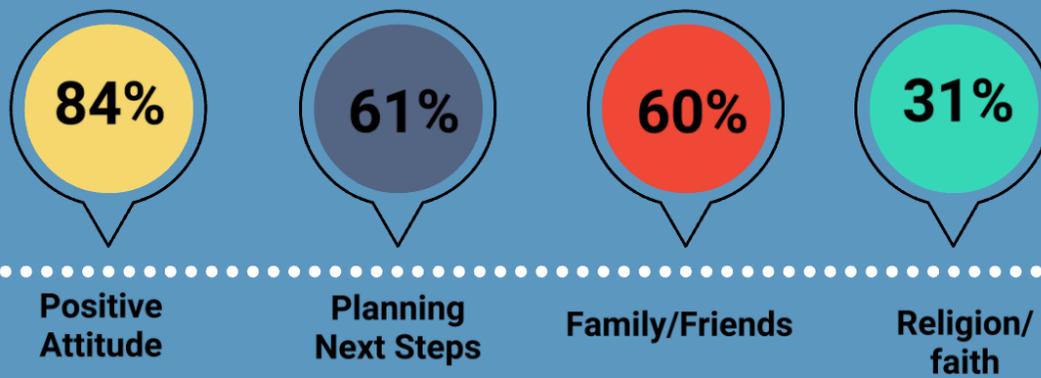
## Needs Now



## Why SOS Region?



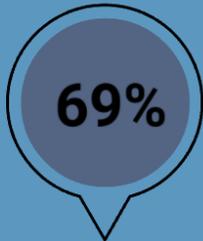
## Sources of Resiliency



# Belonging



Strong connection to Canada



Have jobs



Participate in professional & social clubs



Part of religious orgs.

# Belonging



No Civic Engagement



No Social Engagement



Don't feel that they belong here

## What could help with belonging?



Besides the findings listed above, the following gaps and opportunities were discovered:

- 70% of the respondents did not know about settlement services before arrival; the majority of them learned about these services from their family and friends.
- Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) need information about the Canadian labour laws, in particular, employer/employee rights and responsibilities.
- Many focus group participants noted that they would like to have more info sessions on various service navigation topics in a simple language.
- In response to the question about their goals for the next five years, 45% wished to be fluent in English, 44% wanted to purchase a house/apartment, 42% wanted to make more friends, 33% were hoping to find a job in their professional field and 31% - start their own business.
- The anecdotal evidence collected through the focus group discussions shows that there is a gap in religious accommodation in service provision in the region. For example, because of the patient attachment program (waitlist), newcomers are not able to choose their own family doctor, thus, are not able to select a female or male doctor, which is very important for certain religions.
- Community connections play a very important part in developing a feeling of belonging and many respondents would like to be connected to social activities in the community.

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2020-2025

## Newcomer Settlement Priorities



Language & Employment/entrepreneurship



Social connections & system navigation



Civic engagement & community participation



Community awareness/attitudes



## GOALS, ACTION AREAS AND ACTIVITIES

Based on the research results, the SOSLIP Council reviewed the Partnership goals and prioritized them using the following criteria: relevance for the community, relevance for member organizations, and ability to contribute. All four goals were identified as relevant for the community with Goal 4 (Ensure employers have knowledge, skills and ability to find, hire and retain newcomers) being the highest priority and most relevant to LIP member organizations. Goal 2 (Increase the availability of, accessibility to, and relevance of, language training) was the least relevant to the majority, as only one organization (SOICS) offers free language training in the community.

Below is a set of strategic goals and action areas that the SOSLIP will focus on during the upcoming years.

### **Goal 1: Create an even more welcoming community**

#### Action area:

Contribute to developing a welcoming community where everyone feels safe, respected, comfortable in being themselves, and shares a sense of belonging.

#### Expected Outcomes:

- Organizations have policies and practices in place to ensure everyone feels welcome in the region.
- Newcomer residents feel that they belong here.
- All residents feel proud to be a part of the welcoming community.

### **Goal 2: Support newcomers to develop and/or apply their knowledge, skills and abilities to match the region's work opportunities**

#### Action areas:

- Create opportunities for newcomers to develop skills and acquire experience
- Support newcomer entrepreneurs.

#### Expected Outcomes:

- Newcomers have more employment opportunities, are able to develop their skills "on the job", and feel that they belong in the community.

**Goal 3.: Ensure employers have knowledge, skills and ability to find, hire and retain newcomers**

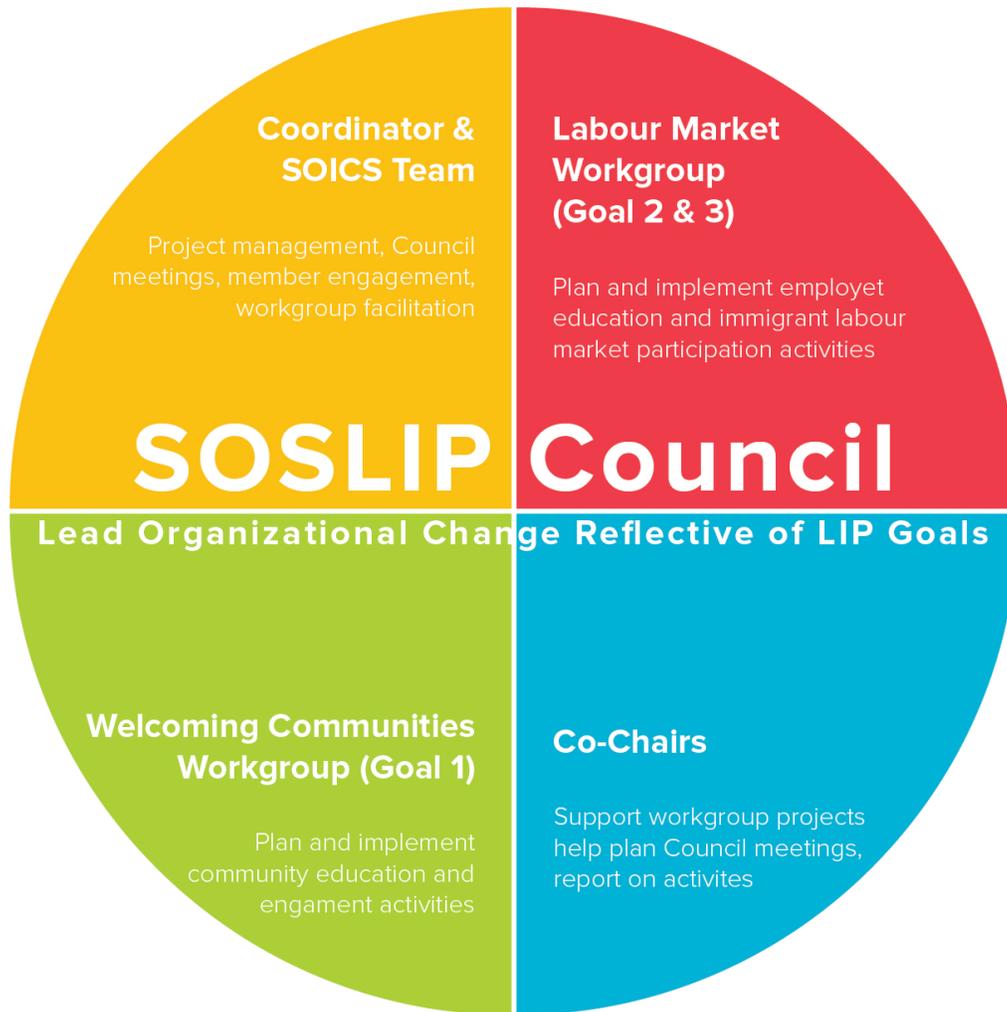
Action areas:

- Support employers in creating a workplace culture that enhances newcomer attraction and retention;
- Support immigrant attraction initiatives (e.g. BC Provincial Nominee Regional Pilot, collaboration with immigrant pre-arrival services).

Expected Outcomes:

- Businesses and organizations have improved capacity to attract and retain qualified employees;
- Increased number of immigrants in the community.

## STRUCTURE & PROCESS



The SOSLIP Council is composed of around 50 members representing local governments, school boards, educational institutions, community organizations, businesses and newcomers. The Council members are involved in two workgroups Labour Market and Welcoming Communities that work on specific strategic directions as shown in the structure diagram. The workgroup facilitators play a role of the Council Co-Chairs – supporting the workgroup projects, helping to plan the Council meetings and reporting on the workgroup activities. The SOSLIP Project Coordinator facilitates all the project activities and is supported by SOICS – the project lead agency. All Council members play a role of newcomer advocates in the community and change agents in their organizations – helping to align organizational goals with the SOSLIP expected outcomes.

## PROJECT CANVAS

<p><b>Purpose:</b> Timely and effective integration of newcomers through community partnerships that focus on diversity and inclusion, accessibility of services, social/economic/civic engagement.</p>		
<p><b>Scope &amp; Timeline</b>            South Okanagan-Similkameen Region: governments, education institutions, social services, health services, arts and recreation, businesses and residents             April 2020-March 2025</p>	<p><b>Success Criteria/Impact Measures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased pace of integration per integration dimensions* (years)</li> <li>• Positive changes in the receiving community's attitudes &amp; behaviours (# of racism &amp; discrimination cases, # of community events celebrating diversity)</li> <li>• Employers use workplace inclusion policies and practices (%)</li> <li>• Employers report hiring more newcomers (#, %)</li> <li>• SOICS reports higher # of newcomers employed (#)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership development (engaged members, Impact Measurement System)</li> <li>• Workplace Inclusion Charter adopted by employers</li> <li>• Employer capacity building (training, tools)</li> <li>• Newcomer economic and social engagement projects (internships, entrepreneurship supports, social and professional networking)</li> <li>• Newcomer civic education &amp; engagement projects (e.g. Newcomer Council)</li> <li>• Public awareness campaigns (Community Champions)</li> <li>• Special projects – addressing local hiring needs through newcomer attraction, training and employment (e.g. healthcare, childcare, construction)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Results</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members participate in workgroups and projects; members implement diversity and inclusion strategies at their organizations</li> <li>• Increased number of partnerships/collaborative projects</li> <li>• Employers adopt the Workplace Inclusion Charter</li> <li>• Newcomers have more opportunities to enter the job market, develop social and professional relationships, make their voices heard at boards and committees</li> <li>• Local community responds to public awareness campaigns by supporting diversity –refugee sponsorship, community events, etc.</li> <li>• Urgent labour market needs are met and service gaps addressed by attracting qualified immigrant professionals</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Team</b>            LIP Council members, Co-chairs, LIP Coordinator, SOICS team</p>	<p><b>Stakeholders</b>            Governments, educational institutions, social services, health services, arts and recreation, businesses, residents, pre-arrival services, funders</p>	<p><b>Users</b>            Newcomers to the SOS regions, potential newcomers</p>
<p><b>Resources</b>            LIP members, Project Coordinator, SOICS team, volunteers, small amount of funding for activities</p>	<p><b>Constraints</b>            Limited resources, competing priorities of member organizations (immigration is not on the high priority list for many organizations that do not have relevant hiring needs)</p>	<p><b>Risks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased engagement of members due to COVID-19 impact on businesses and shifting priorities</li> <li>• Decreased # of immigrants to the region, delays in immigration and family reunification</li> <li>• Anti-immigrant sentiments caused by the pandemic and economic downturn</li> </ul>

\*Integration dimensions: psychological, economic, political, social, linguistic, and navigational

# ATTACHMENTS

## Employer Survey

1. Company/organization name \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. We are looking to hire:
  - # of full-time positions: \_\_\_\_\_
  - # of part-time positions: \_\_\_\_\_
  - # of seasonal positions: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Top skills/qualifications every team member of my company needs to possess are (check all that apply):
  - commercial awareness (knowing how your business works)
  - technical skills (industry specific abilities – accounting, programming, etc.)
  - negotiation
  - communication
  - teamwork
  - problem solving
  - leadership
  - IT skills
  - other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. It is challenging to get the right employees because of (check all that apply):
  - seasonal nature of the jobs
  - lack of qualified job seekers in our region
  - not many people are attracted to these jobs because of a low pay rate, physical labour, insufficient # of hours (circle all that apply), other:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - uncertainty caused by COVID-19
  - other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. My company/organization employs immigrants  
Yes / No; if yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. My company/organization is interested in hiring immigrants  
Yes / No (if no, end of survey)

7. I value the following about hiring immigrants (please check all that apply):
- Global advantage that they bring to local businesses - insight into other business cultures, access to international markets, valuable language skills, and new tools/methods
  - Inter-cultural exchange – by learning about other cultures we enrich our own
  - Providing an opportunity for a newcomer to successfully settle in the community – contribute and belong
  - Commitment and hard work
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. I envision the following to be barriers in hiring immigrants for my company/organization (check all that apply):
- Language (limited ability to communicate in English)
  - Cultural fit
  - Knowledge of the local environment/systems
  - Licensing
  - Credential recognition
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - I don't see any barriers – immigrant employees will learn what they need to learn on the job

9. My organization is open to creating opportunities for my newcomer employees to learn at the workplace:
- English lessons – “lunch and learn” sessions
  - Job shadowing/mentorship
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. I would like to learn more about:
- Where to find and how to attract immigrant employees
  - How to create a workplace where everyone feels welcome
  - Resources to support new employees (e.g. best practices in housing provision, employee orientation, etc.)
  - Resources to help with inter-cultural communication and/or translation
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

11. My name: \_\_\_\_\_  
My e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Newcomer Survey

### Research Questions:

1. Create a demographic profile of immigrants in the SOS region;
2. Identify key strengths & resilience characteristics that newcomers bring and how to utilize these to support their integration goals;
3. Measure immigrant integration level (social, linguistic, political, system navigation, economic);
4. Understand what helps immigrants feel that they belong;
5. Understand what attracts newcomers to the region and how we can enhance these factors;
6. Identify the areas where SOICS and community can support newcomers (needs).

### Demographic Profile & Region's Attractiveness

1. Have you used or are currently using services by the South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services (SOICS)  
Yes / No (if yes, skip questions 2-7)
2. When did you come to Canada?  
 Within the last 5 years  
 5-10 years ago  
 more than 10 years ago
3. Members of the family that came to Canada with you or joined you later. Check all that apply:  
 Spouse/partner  
 Child/children  
 Parents/grandparents  
 I am here alone
4. Did you live somewhere else in Canada before coming here?  
Yes / No, if yes, where:  

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5. Your highest level of education:  
 High school  
 Bachelor's Degree  
 Vocational school - trades certificate  
 Doctorate (PhD)  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  

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6. Your work experience:  
Field: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of years: \_\_\_\_\_
7. How do you describe your ethnicity?  
 Asian  
 South Asian  
 Eurasian  
 Middle Eastern/North African  
 African  
 Hispanic  
 White  
 Don't wish to answer  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Why did you choose to come to the South Okanagan region? Please check all that applies.  
 Family  
 Employment opportunities  
 More affordable housing  
 Weather  
 Other:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Strengths, Resilience & Goals (open-ended?)

9. What are your key strengths?  
 Enthusiasm  
 Trustworthiness  
 Discipline  
 Patience  
 Respectfulness  
 Determination  
 Dedication  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_
10. What makes you strong in the crisis situation? How do you deal with big challenges?  
 Positive attitude  
 Planning next steps  
 Family/friends  
 Religion  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

11. What are your goals for the next five years (professional and social)?

- Find a job in professional field
- Start my own business
- Buy a home
- Become fluent in English
- Make more friends
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Awareness about Settlement Services

12. Did you know about the settlement services (free language, employment and other supports) before you arrived to Canada?

Yes / No

13. How did you learn about the SOICS (South Okanagan Immigrant & Community) services? Please check all that applies.

- Friends/family
- Internet/social media
- Printed media
- SOICS postcard
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

14. What kind of supports do you need now? Please check all that applies.

- Help finding a job
- English language classes
- Help finding housing
- Help with enrolling in a college/university program
- Getting my children into a school
- Finding childcare for my children
- Accessing benefits (e.g. MSP, Child Benefits, etc.)
- Completing government forms or applications
- Applying for essential documents (e.g. SIN Card, Passports, etc.)
- Understanding Immigration Pathways and Canadian Citizenship
- Making social connections, finding friends
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Integration Level

15. How connected do you feel with Canada?

- I feel a very close connection
- I feel a moderately close connection
- I feel a weak connection
- I do not feel a connection at all
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Thinking about your future, where do you want to live?

- I definitely want to live in Canada for the rest of my life
- I probably want to live in Canada for the rest of my life
- I am unsure if I want to remain in Canada or if I want to move to another country
- I probably want to move to another country
- I definitely want to move to another country
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. What's your work status?

- Employed
- Self-employed/Freelance
- Part-time
- Unemployed- Looking for work
- Unemployed – Not looking for work
- Doing unpaid housework, looking after children or other persons
- Studying
- Retired
- Not able to work
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

18. How satisfied are you with your current employment/education situation?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

19. In the last 12 months, how often did you typically discuss major political issues facing Canada with others?

- Never
- Once a year
- Once a month
- Once a week
- Almost every day

20. During the last 12 months have you done any of the following? Please check all that apply:

- Engaged in public or online discussions regarding politics in Canada
- Contacted a politician, or a government official
- Worked in a political party or action group
- Worn or displayed a political badge, sticker, or sign
- Signed a petition
- Took part in a lawful public demonstration
- Boycotted certain products
- Collected signatures for a petition

21. In the last 12 months, how often did you eat dinner with people who were born in Canada?

- Never
- Once a year
- Once a month
- Once a week
- Almost every day

22. In Canada you need to have private insurance to access such services as dental, chiropractic, massage therapy.

True / False

### Feeling of Belonging

23. Do you feel that you are a part of this community? Do you feel that you belong?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

24. What would help you feel that you belong in this community?

- Ability to communicate effectively/improved language skills
- Bringing my family here (reunification)
- Friends and social networks
- Meaningful employment/own business
- Understanding how systems work – health, education, etc.
- Opportunity to participate in community development and local politics
- When people learn to pronounce my name correctly
- When people do not ask me about where I am from but, instead, ask about my cultural background or the languages that I speak
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

25. What groups are you a part of? Please check all that apply.

- A group related to your job, like a union, business, or professional organization
- A group related to your religious beliefs, like a church, mosque, synagogue, or other religious organization
- A group related to your hobbies, like a sports, leisure, or cultural group
- A group related to a social or political cause, such as a voluntary organization or political party
- Another voluntary organization
- None of the above

26. If you would like us to support you in achieving your goals, please provide your name and contact info:

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## Newcomer Stories

“I am from South Korea. I came here 5 years ago. I found an employer in Penticton. My husband is a Korean-American. We got married in Penticton. We have a two-year-old son and a baby daughter. My husband works and I stay at home with the children. I love Penticton more than Seoul. I like busy cities sometimes but I like to live in a quiet place like Penticton.”

“I am from India. I have lived here not two years, one month left. I have one baby, a boy. He is 10 month old. I live with my husband. I belong to big family. My whole family lives in India. My husband works in Surrey. I will be going back to my work in a few days. I work at a grocery store. I have a post-graduate degree in nursing from India. My goal is to improve my English and complete the studying for a nursing degree here. “

“I came from Thailand. I have been living in Penticton for three years. The reason I came to Canada is because my aunt has a business here, a restaurant. She needed me help her to run her business. Before I came to Canada I worked as nutritionist. I worked at a hospital for three years. Next year my daughter will come to Canada to stay with me forever. She is six years old. I saw her two years ago. They were planning to come this year but then COVID ruined my life.”

“I am Korean. I lived in Japan for 15 years before I came to Canada. I have lived in Penticton almost one year. Before coming to Penticton I lived in Kelowna one year. For Penticton...I had to move for my husband’s employment but I am also studying at the Okanagan College and Okanagan College has a campus in Penticton. My husband is a software programmer. I think it was easier for him to find a job than for many other people. I am studying business, especially accounting. It is interesting but difficult to study. I have a degree in horticulture and in Japan I studied to be a Korean language instructor. I have taught Korean to Japanese for 10 years. I would like to teach Korean here.”

“I have been in Penticton for almost three years. We choose Penticton because my husband’s grandpa used to live here in Penticton and he came to visit him many times and he loved Penticton, people in Penticton and...he loved the weather in Penticton... he love community here. In Thailand I studied accounting in high school and university but my work for 14 years was import-export, purchasing, secretary, logistics. Here, before COVID-19, I used to work at a restaurant as waitress.”

Do you belong to any social club or faith group (temple, church, mosque etc.)?

“I volunteer at my church – organize meetings with children to study the Bible and play games.”

“I don’t belong to any club or faith group. But we went to Sikh temple every week. I also joined baby talk group after my delivery.”

“I don’t belong to any club. But I like to connect with people. Before COVID, I loved to go to the meetings at Cowork Penticton. I met my best friends in Penticton there. Also, I loved to go to play in a group of board games, I liked to practice my English with people from Canada and newcomers in that club.”

“I go to church. I used to go every Sunday with my family. During COVID-19 I attend a virtual meeting. Usually I am listening. Talking just a little. It is hard to be a part of the discussion because they are not used to sharing [info] with other immigrants. I don’t want to bother me. It is good time for me. The purpose of these meetings is not to learn English. I just want to share my life with the same group, Christians.”

“I have a cooking club. I also joined community garden. And I go to a lot of parties with Canadians. We used to go to CoWork and go to Junior Chamber but now we are over 40 years old, so we can’t join.”

“I went to Zumba club and now I go to a fitness centre. I work and I don’t have much time to socialize.”

What are your key strengths?

“My first key of strength is God. When I felt stressed, emotionally disturb due to personal issue. I read a few shabad of Gurbani. They gave me peace in my life. My second strength is my Family. When I looked my mother. She maintained discipline in the home. She gave me support for career development. She always encouraged to me, “you can do it.” That’s faith helped for successful life.”

“My key strengths are my curiosity, determination, discipline, and patient. I think that I can be happy and feel complete wherever I was. In my first year living in Penticton it was difficult to find the way but knowing how and what to do it is being easier and I am enjoying the process.”

“Family is my strength. They make me happy. God is strength for me. And friends too.”

“One of my strengths is that I believe that people are kind, maybe a part of them. I feel confident to talk with Canadians even if they don’t understand me because of their

kindness. Sometime I ask for help and they will help me. And I smile and kind to them too, so we can communicate to each other.”

“My strength is my God. She gave me all abilities, so I can do anything. My ability is to know that I can do it by myself. Sometime when you don’t have emotional balance...my husband gave me support.”

What makes you strong in the crisis situation? How do you deal with big challenges?

“My family gives me strength internally and my friends give me the outer strength.”

“In Korean society men have a lot of responsibilities. Me too. I have to solve my family’s problem by myself. So, I endure crisis silently, keep it inside. If I tell my wife, she will be sad. And I can’t talk to my friends about it if I didn’t share it with my wife first.”

“What helps me is my faith. I go to church. I have a community here and in Japan and they pray for me. I pray for them. It’s a big thing for me.”

“Positive thinking. Romantic TV shows encourage me to live.”

“I have a passion. Sometimes I am in a bad situation and I know I have to suffer that and get over that by myself, and no one can help. And when you do it after many years you are proud of yourself.”

“In the community where I live now we have seven nationalities but no one is from country. Sometimes I have difficult moments but no one can help me. So I ask God. Another thing that helps is sharing with other people. When I do that, my problem does not look that big anymore. When I am dealing with it by myself, I am not comfortable. But when I share with other people, this makes me very strong.”

“When the crisis situation happens into my life. I deal with those events by strong physically, emotionally motivation. Example of this situation happened in my life. When I studied in seventh class, my father had passed away. I used coping strategies or techniques to overcome crisis situation.”

“My family makes me strong in the crisis. First, I like to think about what is happened and then I talk with my husband, after, depends how bad is the situation I call my mom and dad. After talking with them I think and write about scenarios. I write about the bad, the not too bad and the good possibilities and then I write about what I can do and if I need to ask for help. Then I try to be positive and proactive if is necessary I ask for help to my family and friend.”

“Many people offer me help. If I ask, they help me. I feel that I am not a long. Many people to support me. This makes me strong in community.”

What are your goals for next five years?

“I wanted to complete my study. My goal of life is to become a Registered Nurse in Canada. I would move to my profession. I felt happy when I take care of someone who has suffered from any problem.”

“My goals are to be more integrated into the community and be working in my field. I applied to two different jobs, in both I passed the resume, technical and researching assignments but I didn't pass the interview. I've been working on getting better in my interview skills.”

Do you feel like you belong in this community? What would help you feel that?

“I am satisfied living in Penticton. I don't have many friends here and sometimes I am lonely. I miss friends in my home country. But I can overcome this because I talk to my friends and family on cell phone. I am invited to my son's friends' birthdays but I can't talk to their parents because I can't speak English well, so to make friends is hard for me.”

“I think if I feel separate from the community in Canada, it is my problem, because people try to communicate to me. But I think that I don't speak English well, so I can't connect to them.”

“For a long time I could not understand why people say “How are you?” all day to me. Their answer is the same. But I found that they are interest for me and they know how I can feel. It is very kind. In Penticton it is countryside. People open their hearts. I lived in Tokyo for a long time. People don't have interest to other people.”

“I like when people say hello. I feel relaxed. I feel connected to Canada.”

“Sometimes I miss my hometown. But my husband and I opened a business at a special time and feel the community.”

“For me Canadian people...they are very polite. They talk to you. I want to take every opportunity to grow but sometime because of fear I “close the door”.

“I felt ignored when someone don't pay attention to me. We need social group or club where we met with others and shared belief or values.”

“When I came to Penticton, I was a little confused about what I could do here. I was very excited about it and I asked about coffees and clubs to go. Somebody told me about the library, but when I went it was so difficult to feel a part of because nobody knew that I was new, so they were too formal, I felt very scared. After I have other experiences when I couldn't connect. I was a newcomer, but I felt like I was only visiting Penticton. It was until I met other newcomers or Canadian from other provinces living here that I felt connected and integrated, because they know how we are feeling and for that we are able to connect better.”

“Many people offer me help. If I ask, they help me. I feel that I am not a long. Many people support me. This makes me strong in community.”

“Personally, I cannot say I am belonging in Penticton but I want to feel belonging. To feel that I need to meet people, I need to join a group. I don't have a lot of chances to meet other people. Even when I meet neighbours they just say “hi”.”

“I have a lot of senior friends who are Canadians... They are good listeners and they have a lot of experience.”

“When I moved to Penticton I felt loneliness. I needed help with my baby's crib and my English teacher helped me. She is a very good person and she is helping me.”