



Upholding the Canadian Promise

Recommendations for a
Community Economic
Development (CED)
approach to settlement
challenges.

April 18th 2007

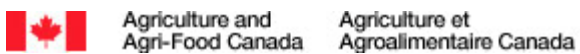


The Canadian **CED** Network

Le Réseau canadien de **DÉC**

Strengthening Canada's Communities

Des communautés plus fortes au Canada



The Co-operative Secretariat is pleased to participate in the production of this publication. Opinions expressed in this document are not necessarily those of Co-operative Secretariat.

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Introduction

The Canadian CED Network (CCEDNet) is a national member-based, democratic organization registered as a charity. The membership of CCEDNet consists of over 650 organizations and individual practitioners from every region of Canada. CCEDNet members bring urban, rural and northern experience and a diverse range of CED expertise to the work of CCEDNet. The CCEDNet mission is to promote and support CED (CED) for the social, economic and environmental betterment of communities within Canada.

Through work of our members, CCEDNet recognized that community and civil society organizations and small and medium enterprises across Canada are intervening in the economy in order to address concerns and issues that manifest at the community level with immigrant and refugee populations. CCEDNet, in partnership with several member organizations, through its Immigrant and Refugee Community Action Network (ICAN), determined that there was a need to analyze this community level action and to create a policy position informed by members in order to facilitate their voice in the development of policies and programs aimed at promoting immigrant settlement and integration. ICAN was launched in 2006 as the vehicle to bring this voice forward.

Immigrant and refugee persons face serious settlement challenges. Integrating into their new community is made exceedingly difficult due to their limited social and professional networks, the non-recognition of foreign experience and credentials, and the competitive nature of the Canadian labour market. Increasingly, newcomers are frustrated by being on the margins of Canadian society. The resources they bring to Canada (social, cultural, professional, financial and international networks) are being wasted on survival (meeting challenges such as housing, clothing and feeding themselves) rather than on their full participation and contribution to the development of Canada. The impact of the marginalization of people is well documented and includes: worsening health outcomes, isolation and loneliness, difficulty with French and English, child poverty, and low participation in the democratic life of Canada. We are not delivering on Canada's promise for the future of our country.

This paper presents CCEDNet's policy proposals for meeting the social and economic needs of new Canadians, and immigrants and refugees in Canada.

In June 2006, immigrant and refugee CED practitioners from across Canada, came together to construct a national action plan for enhancing the uptake of CED within immigrant and refugee communities. Since that forum, CCEDNet has documented the evidence base for the four main components of the action plan, including 1) Raising awareness of the realities of immigrant and refugee experience with CED; 2) Developing strategic partnerships with stakeholders; 3) Building Capacity for CED within diverse immigrant and refugee communities; and 4) Advocacy and policy development.

This paper reviews community responses to unmet settlement needs of immigrants and refugees in the Canadian context. It concludes that many immigrants and refugees who arrive in Canada are socially and economically disadvantaged and are unable to access the appropriate government support services that they require. It calls on the federal government to expand the types of services available through ‘settlement programs’ to include a new stream of activity that would fund CED initiatives that build capacity at a level that is accessible to newcomers and appropriate to their needs.

In addition, this paper calls for changes in how these settlement services are delivered and makes recommendations as to how CED could promote integrated, community-based models for providing human capital development services (including English as a second language and employment programs). Increased collaboration with governments at all levels is needed to remove the obstacles to such a model and to enable its advantages to be realized. The policy initiatives proposed below are discussed in fuller detail at the end of the paper.

CED Policy Proposals for Immigrant and Refugee Settlement

1. Build the Capacity of the CED and Co-op Sectors to Contribute to Immigrant Settlement
2. Include CED Programs as Eligible Services Under the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program
3. Support the Leadership of Immigrant and Refugee Groups in Developing CED Tools and Strategies to Meet Their Needs
4. Promote Learning and Collaboration Amongst Stakeholders on the Use of CED in Attracting and Settling Newcomers

These policy proposals will be reviewed and debated on April 18th 2007 in St. John’s Newfoundland at the first Immigrant and Refugee Centred CED policy forum which is held in conjunction with the 2007 National CED Conference. The forum will bring together multiple stakeholders including representatives of the federal government, national sector associations and grassroots CED practitioners.

The Policy Development Process

Outreach and Engagement

In 2004, CCEDNet embarked on a program of outreach and engagement of immigrant and refugee practitioners. We learned two things very early on. First, we learned that the networks of the CED and co-operative sectors that extend into universities, credit unions, neighbourhood associations, funding agencies, and numerous non-profits in every region in Canada did not reach, generally, into immigrant and refugee communities. The second thing we learned is that within immigrant and refugee communities there is a massive demand for CED knowledge, resources, strategies and tools.

In a three year time period we engaged over 100 immigrant and refugee CED practitioners for the purpose of building resilient networks, mutual sharing of knowledge and to leverage much needed resources to immigrant and refugee CED efforts. We did this through a variety of methods including partnering with the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative to deliver a pilot forum in Edmonton, AB in October 2003. This forum brought together over 75 stakeholders including federal, provincial and municipal government, the CED and Co-operative sector, the immigrant settlement sector and community leaders within immigrant and refugee communities. The forum confirmed that there is a demand for CED and participants specifically called for CED and co-op development training opportunities. The forum also revealed that there is a conflict between immigrant settlement agencies and immigrant and refugee communities themselves. These themes are expanded upon in section 3 and 4.

By 2006, we had built trusted relationships with several immigrant-led CED initiatives across Canada and they shared their stories with us. We published those stories in a booklet called ‘Storytelling Newcomers’ Experience with CED in Canada.’ We reflect on those stories here in the context of government programs and policy.

A common thread that ran through all the stories is that immigrant and refugee practitioners feel isolated. In June 2006, CCEDNet brought these practitioners together with known allies to begin the build relationships and a peer group, but also a plan of action to overcome some of the barriers and challenges that are unique to CED within immigrant and refugee communities. During that two day action planning forum, the group not only created national and provincial action plans, but also formed their own identity called ‘Immigrant and Refugee Community Action Network (ICAN).’

Immigrant and Refugee Community Action Network (ICAN)

ICAN is a network of immigrant and refugee CED practitioners and their allies. It’s purpose is to raise awareness of immigrant and refugee realities, develop partnerships, build capacity of CED practitioners and be that space for an immigrant voice within the CED and co-op movements.

ICAN is convened by CCEDNet and meets monthly over teleconference. From September 2006 until April 2007, ICAN has been preparing for the first ever national Immigrant and refugee centred CED policy forum. This forum is held in conjunction with the 2007 National CED Conference in St. John's Newfoundland on April 18th 2007. This paper will serve as the basis for discussion and further refinement of an immigrant and refugee centred CED policy initiative.

Comprehensive Approach

It is now understood that people who experience one disadvantage often will experience another. In other words, if a person experiences health problems, they are more likely to experience poverty. If a person experiences poverty, they are more likely to experience low income, inadequate education and so on. These forces are reinforcing and self-supporting. As such, CED strives to take a comprehensive approach to people and social sustainability. It means that we consider all aspects of a person's life when working with them. It also means that we reject the definitions of integration and settlement as inadequate goals and are in conflict with the goals set out in Canada's multiculturalism policy.

“So, to our original premise—that we need immigrants—we need to add a second premise: We need to do better by immigrants. Therefore we need to do settlement better, differently.” Ratna Omidvar (Caledon Commentary, Sept 2001) From keynote address delivered at the National Settlement Conference, Kingston Ontario Monday June 18, 2001.

Statistics Canada analysis of 2001 Census data is grim and found that immigrants were ‘twice as likely as Canadian-born workers to earn less than \$20 000 a year.’ The Multicultural Health Brokers expanded on this research and concluded that the statistical evidence demonstrates a new pattern of effectively non-settlement of newcomers in Canada. In other words, newcomers are not settling as they used to.

Traditionally, most immigrants have a transitional period of low income but then over time outperform the Canadian born, however there is growing evidence that more recent groups of arrivals have not fared as well as past groups. (2004, *Creating the Context: Researching the Role of Co-operatives in the Canadian Immigrant Experience*)

We propose that the Immigrant Settlement policy and programs which worked well in the past, no longer achieve the stated outcomes of Citizenship and Immigration Canada which are as follows:

We strive to foster an environment conducive to the compatible cohabitation of culturally and socially diverse groups while at the same time encouraging social and economic integration, with improvements to quality of life for all segments of the population. The quicker newcomers integrate into the community, the faster they become full and productive members of society—both economically and socially. (2004 CIC)

In order to better understand the reasons why newcomers are not settling into their new communities and with that understanding come up with pragmatic solutions, we look to the literature on social inclusion. The following table has been adapted from CCEDNet's work on social inclusion. Social inclusion is understood to be a set of inter-related factors which include cultural, economic, functional, participatory, physical, political, relational, and structural. The

following table outlines how CED approaches are able to positively affect each dimension of social inclusion.

Dimensions	How social enterprise and co-operatives contribute to each in the context of immigrants and refugees.
Cultural	Promotes interaction between cultures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers engage in democratic decision making with other workers; many enterprises include ‘hands on opportunity’ to experience another culture through cooking food, sewing traditional products, or growing agricultural products unique to a culture, and sharing in the arts and cultural
Economic	Social enterprises pay the workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ladder opportunities into further education, small business development and/or higher paying jobs
Functional	Social enterprises are welcoming, safe and caring environments that focus on building self-esteem and recognizing that all persons need to have their dignity. This is done by involving workers in decision making and valuing their contributions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People from war affected communities and refugee camps, in particular, may have trouble learning in a classroom/lecture style. Social enterprises within these communities often incorporate ESL into the business. Workers also gain experiential education in banking, computers,
Participatory	Democratically governed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases options through networking and skill building
Physical	Are visible to public and broader community Promotes healthy interaction between people through market exchanges (both parties receive benefit from exchange)
Political	Provides a vehicle for newcomers and refugees to have a voice in the socio-economic development of communities
Relational	membership in a group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> direct feedback & affirmation from customers
Structural	Creates community wealth and assets that can be utilised for new initiatives and to partner with other organizations to build cultural competency, thereby increasing structural access to existing programs (i.e. health care)

Community Level Innovation

People and organizations at the community level are expressing many worries about our current immigration system and immigrant settlement practices. However, they are also taking matters into their own hands and finding new and exciting ways to contend with these problems. Innovation at the community level includes experimentation with new forms of business, new products and services and new initiatives in public education and community organizing. The contribution of community organizations is building an increasing awareness of the reality of immigrant experience that will facilitate local level problem solving. It is also giving voice to the experience of immigrants and refugees in Canada and highlighting their ability to contribute to Canada's policy goal of creating an open and tolerant society.

Co-operatives

Co-operatives are a unique form of enterprise in which the members own the enterprise. The International Co-operative Alliance offers this definition of co-operatives. "A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise." Co-operatives allow people to pool their resources to create an enterprise that provides services in a way that uniquely suits their needs. They have played an integral role in the development and prosperity of Canada's agricultural and financial sectors. Co-operatives create social capital amongst the members who own it. They build networks of mutual support. The co-operative sector is also well organized in Canada by both region and economic sector (i.e. financial, housing, and food to name a few) and thus create a unique type of social capital called 'bridging' which is especially important in bridging immigrant communities to mainstream economic development sectors. Co-operatives have always played an important role in contributing to the settlement of immigrants to Canada and in recent years there is a renewed uptake of the co-op model within newcomer, both immigrant and refugee communities. These co-operatives are contributing to the overall social fabric and economic innovation of Canada. Emerging forms of immigrant-led co-operatives provide specifically in their purpose to contribute to the settlement outcomes of newcomers. They do this by incorporating English and financial literacy training into the workplace and also by building networks of support. Some co-operatives contribute to settlement outcomes by their very nature. For example, the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative has created a new form of health care called cultural brokering which brokers access to health care for newcomers. Education co-operatives are schools that are governed by parents of students. This model of co-operative has been utilised by different ethno-cultural groups as a way to manage cultural retention and supplement Canadian curriculum with cultural content including first language instruction. For a full discussion of immigrant and refugee co-operatives refer to the publication available on CCEDNet's website called "Creating Opportunities-Optimizing Possibilities: Immigrant and Refugee Co-operatives in Canada."

Training and Social Enterprises

Social enterprise—put simply—is a business with a social purpose. But that’s where the simplicity ends. They are bottom-up, grassroots endeavors and designed specifically to the unique needs and strengths of a community. For that reason they look different in each community. Also, for that reason they foster social innovation. While they look different in each community, they do all share the following characteristics:

1. They are not-for-profit ventures. That is to say that they generate sales revenue and they reinvest it to meet a social purpose.
2. They operate independently of government
3. They are democratically governed
4. They combine government or community investment with market sales
5. They operate explicitly for the common good and in the public interest
6. They build a sense of community and social networks
7. They are a cost effective way of delivering a social service (such as language training)
8. They foster social innovation

Some types of social enterprise are referred to as training businesses. For this type of social enterprise it is understood that some people can neither sit in a classroom nor thrive in a mainstream work environment *yet* they do have something to contribute. In these businesses, people are hired from a particular population and it is understood and even expected that people will bring personal challenges into the workplace. The business, whether it be landscaping, graphic design or food processing helps people overcome their personal challenges and builds friendships and at the same time provides income and labour market skills.

Stated alternatively, perhaps even a bit provocatively, workers in a social enterprise are not forced to adapt to mainstream work conditions; rather the enterprise adapts to them. This model can be particularly successful in supporting people from war affected places who may have lived their entire lives in refugee camps without access to education and may be not able to read or write in their own first language. Workplace-based learning is more appropriate for people who have never been in a classroom.

Social enterprises not only achieve social outcomes such as education and relationships, they also achieve financial outcomes for both individual participants and also the non-profit agency that manages the enterprise and their funders. Workers or participants in a social enterprise get much needed income. Agencies that run social enterprise also generate revenue through market sales which help offset the operating costs. More research is needed to be done to better understand the cost savings associated with training enterprises, but initial anecdotal evidence suggests that after five years a training enterprise can achieve market sales equivalent to 50% of the operating costs. In other words, for every \$1 invested by government a training enterprise is able to leverage \$1 through market sales. When this is butted up against social and economic outcomes which are generated for participants, this model merits further investigation by all levels of government. The following is one example of a social enterprise which is specifically set-up for the purpose of achieving settlement outcomes for newcomers to Canada.

EthniCity Catering is a training enterprise which is owned by the Calgary Centre for Newcomers. The enterprise was expanded from a collective kitchen program. In 1997, the first year of operation the business had \$8000 in sales; in 2004 the business generated \$88 000 in revenue.

What's unique about the business is the approach they take to recruiting. EthniCity has set qualifications in direct opposite of Canadian norms. In other words, a person qualifies to work there if they have no Canadian experience, no friends and little to no English. What they offer is an hourly wage, three hours of work each day, a sense of belonging, food service training and play space for children. The results are outstanding.

- About 40 people immigrants and refugees work in the enterprise each year
- 100% go on to work or education
- 70% go on to employment
- 30% seek additional education
- The business leverages \$1 for every \$1 invested by public or community funding.

These innovations at the community level are achieving significant outcomes in all three program areas—language, employment and settlement—which are defined by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, yet do not qualify for funding under CIC's programs. This is a short synopsis of what we know to date. Additional stories are available on CCEDNet's website in the publication "Storytelling Newcomers' Experience with CED in Canada." Further research should be undertaken to document the evidence and evaluate outcomes in comparison to mainstream settlement programming.

Emerging Themes

The following discussion is a brief, yet important acknowledgement of the emerging themes in undertaking CED within immigrant and refugee communities.

Refugee experiences must be understood

For many refugees, their first experience with their Canadian-born peers and others who are settled in Canada—is a narrow experience which is defined by their circumstance as a client of social service agencies. In other words, the first time they interact with someone in their new country it is as a client—and often their second, third, fourth and fifth time. For some people they spend many years in this country as a client. Every time they interact with someone the other person gives and they receive. A social enterprise provides an opportunity for newcomers and refugees especially to engage in a relationship with Canadians that can be thought of as an ‘exchange of equivalents’ or an exchange of equals. Think about if you have a small landscaping business and you are hired to cut grass and plant trees. A service is exchanged for money and both parties benefit from the exchange. Social enterprises have the potential to radically transform relations between the most marginalized and mainstream in society.

In addition, many refugees suffer from trauma, mental health issues, poverty and low literacy rates. Community-based organizations across Canada are calling for refugee health clinics and hospitals that are equipped with personally and services directed to the unique circumstances of refugees and in particular those from war affected places.

CED starts with basic needs

The CED process starts by ensuring basic needs such as housing, food, childcare and transportation are met. Specific attention to this is given to immigrants and refugees to ensure that these basic needs do not become barriers to the inclusion of immigrants and refugees in a beginning of a CED process. The process includes community animation and organizing which is guided by principles such as trust, solidarity and respect. The next step is venture identification and refining of an initiative. For many immigrant and refugee communities we know that there are some sectors which are a natural fit. These sectors are those which have a higher rate of consumption for newcomers (food from home countries, for example) and promote cultural awareness and engagement. They include cultural goods and services such as food processing, the apparel industry, and language and cooking education to name a few.

Immigrant community leaders need support

Immigrant and refugee community leaders often find that their time and skills are required to problem solve the most urgent situations. Immigrant and refugee CED practitioners need financial support to be able to participate in learning and networking events. Many immigrant and refugee leaders are undertaking CED initiatives as volunteer work and for those that are employed in related fields, often their CED as part of the work. As such, these leaders often feel

isolated and lacking support. They invite the mainstream co-operative and community development sectors to reach out to them.

CED and co-operative development training should be targeted to immigrants and refugees

It is difficult for a community economic or co-operative developer to be effective when working in another culture. Social norms, trust and ways of ‘getting things done’ are specific to culture. Leadership and CED practitioners should be nurtured within immigrant communities. CED and co-operative development training initiatives can easily include immigrant and refugee practitioners by first finding out what is required for them to participate (sometimes time of day can make or break an event!) and then by adapting the training so that it is based on the principle of mutuality. In other words, immigrant and refugee leaders are engaged to share the realities of the immigrant experience and the training is adapted to that reality. In this way, we will also build capacity of mainstream CED and co-op developers to work in culturally diverse settings.

Settlement agencies and CED

Some settlement agencies are actively advancing CED approaches to enhance settlement of newcomers. The Calgary Centre for Newcomers spearheaded EthniCity Catering and the Immigrant Services Society of BC is incubating the Malalay: Afghan Women’s Sewing and Crafts Co-operative. Settlement agencies have reported to us that there are several considerations for agencies to be able to undertake CED initiatives. They include the following:

- Funding for CED is short term and insufficient to cover the costs of initiatives.
- Governing directors of settlement agency often see a perceived conflict in charitable agencies owning and managing businesses.
- Lack of training and expertise in CED amongst settlement workers and managers mean that settlement agencies need to engage the CED sector as partners to undertake CED.
- Program reporting requirements make it difficult to create integrating programming that achieves all outcomes in all three program areas—that is language, employment and settlement.

Summary

While innovations at the community level are often congratulated and held up as examples, they lack support and they often exist despite policy and programs. Some of the issues which are impeding growth and expanded success of these initiatives include:

- Lack of relationships between immigrant communities and the CED /co-op sector;
- Lack of accountability of settlement agencies to the clients they serve;
- Insufficient number of trained immigrant CED/co-op practitioners;
- Lack of understanding of realities of immigrant and refugee experience;
- Lack of funding available for community animation/development processes targeted to immigrant and refugee communities;

- Silo approach to integration as demonstrated by three program areas: Language, Employment, and Settlement.

It is with these issues in mind that we have formulated the recommendations presented in the following section.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations have been identified to strengthen the integration, inclusion and settlement of immigrants and refugees, addressed to both federal and provincial governments in their respective mandates for immigrant settlement, as well as to local governments and the co-operative and CED sectors roles in contributing to enhancing the economic and social conditions of Canada's communities.

To respond to the needs of communities in all parts of the country by creating opportunities for individuals to come to Canada to make an economic, social, cultural and civic contribution while also realizing their full potential, and to strengthen the integration of newcomers and maximize their contribution to the country, we recommend:

1. Build the Capacity of the CED and Co-op Sectors to Contribute to Immigrant Settlement

Policy Goal: Build the capacity of the CED and co-operative sectors to strengthen their contributions to building opportunities for newcomers to learn entrepreneurial skills and engage in collaborative enterprises that lead to sustainable labour market, economic and social integration.

Strategies:

- a. **Citizenship and Immigration Canada should fund the convening of an ongoing dialogue** between immigrant and refugee groups through the Immigrant Community Action Network (ICAN), co-operative and CED organizations, immigrant settlement agencies, and government representatives on how CED can be strengthened as a tool for immigrant settlement.
- b. **Partners in the Dialogue should develop a Strategic Plan as a key outcome**, to strengthen engagement and inclusion of immigrant and refugee groups and interests in the plans and programs of existing Canadian co-operative and CED organizations in both rural and urban areas of Canada so that they can include in their ongoing operations relevant supports for enterprise development by immigrants and refugees.
- c. **The Co-operative Development Initiative should be refinanced beyond the 2008 sunset of its current funding** by Agriculture and Agro-Industries Canada, with a strong element related to financing action on co-operative development tools and resources for immigrant and refugee communities.

2. Include CED Programs as Eligible Services Under the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program

Policy Goal: Enhance funding to CED activities as a component of settlement and adaptation services that can strengthen entrepreneurship, self employment and enterprise development as a means for immigrants and refugees to achieve economic and labour market integration.

Strategies:

- A. **Citizenship and Immigration Canada should develop a demonstration program** to create and replicate best practices in using CED approaches to strengthen entrepreneurship, self employment and enterprise development as a means for immigrant integration. Locate the demonstration project sites in communities that are representative of Canadian economic and labour market typologies and regions. Involve ICAN, CCEDNet, CCA, CCC, CISSA and other partners in developing, evaluating and replicating the demonstration program.
- B. **Introduce changes to ISAP to allow for more holistic models of economic and social integration** to be developed, including self directed models that involve the leadership of immigrant and refugee groups themselves in creating CED opportunities.
- C. **Engage provinces and municipalities in exploring CED models** in their own settings, including models that better integrate the full range of language, hosting and settlement programming at the local level.

3. Support the Leadership of Immigrant and Refugee Groups in Development Community Economic Developing Tools and Strategies to Meet Their Needs

Policy Goal: Build on the knowledge and experience of immigrant and refugee community organizations in addressing challenges to their settlement and integration to inform policy and program development and enhance capacity for self directed CED initiatives.

Strategies:

- A. **Citizenship and Immigration Canada should support the Immigrant and Refugee Community Action Network (ICAN)** to develop tools, resources, and activities that share learning, build capacity and generate from their experience lessons for policy and program development at the local, provincial and national level.
- B. **A first step in supporting ICAN should be taken in 2007, leveraged with potential foundation and provincial government funders,** to enable them to convene a national

learning event and conference, reaching out to small immigrant and refugee communities that have little opportunity to learn with others about CED approaches to their needs.

4. Promote Learning and Collaboration Amongst Stakeholders on the Use of CED in Attracting and Settling Newcomers

Policy Goal: Engage a broad range of stakeholders in collaborative learning, education, and research on how communities can maximize the successful settlement of newcomers and their contribution to local economies through collaborative approaches to CED.

Strategies:

- A. **Resource an Action Research Project involving case studies of successful models** of using CED to create economic, labour market, and social integration outcomes, and the lessons learned from those models.
- B. **Create a Learning Network of interested stakeholders, using on-line and tele-learning** to share the lessons learned from the research project, and promote learning from other research and development activities.
- C. **Promote collaboration between the Metropolis Research Program and the Social Economy Research Program** (both funded by SSHRC) in partnership research on CED models for immigrant integration involving practitioners and universities in those existing research networks, ICAN, and other relevant stakeholders.