

FINAL REPORT

UNDERSTANDING THE
CULTURAL ADAPTATION
EXPERIENCES OF
IMMIGRANTS TO RURAL
AND SMALL TOWN
NEWFOUNDLAND

PREPARED FOR THE RURAL SECRETARIAT

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OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador currently attracts approximately 400 immigrants per year, a number it hopes to more than double in years to come (Multiculturalism, 2007). In order to meet this goal, the government is putting more time and resources into immigrant recruitment and retention. For example, the Province is participating in international immigration fairs around the world and is selecting immigrants that meet a particular need for an expedited federal immigration review process called the Provincial Nominee Program (Burke, 2008).

This study aims to add a more rural perspective to what we already know about the immigrant experience. It aspires to capture and illustrate the cultural adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural Newfoundland as well as explore the perspectives of native-born Newfoundlanders on what sort of cultural changes are happening on an individual and community level. For reasons of time, and a difference in context, the study only includes data collected on the island portion of the province.

RELATED LITERATURE

Within cultural adaptation research there are two academics that emerge as particularly prolific and influential: Berry and Kim. Berry (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007; Berry & Kalin, 1995; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Kalin & Berry, 1996) argues that “acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (2005, p. 698). This mutual sociocultural and psychological change takes place over many years and can lead to individual changes in behaviour and institutional and social change. Berry (2007) is particularly interested in how acculturation happens, the strategies people choose, and if there is a relationship between the strategies they choose and their psychological and social success. Berry’s (2007) model offers four acculturation strategies for immigrants and four strategies for the larger society and although he admits his largest assumption is that people get to choose how to acculturate, his model attempts to recognize the influence of the dominant society’s influence on immigrant acculturation.

Kim (Kim, 1987, 2001, 2005; Kim & Gudykunst, 1988) is another academic central to theorizing cultural adaptation. Her Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory explores how the adaptation process unfolds over time and what factors might affect the speed at which people adapt. She assumes that everyone who interacts with their environment will adapt, so the question becomes how and why (2005).

As important as the aforementioned research is, this study serves to add to past research efforts on a number of fronts. First of all, there is little research that focuses on the adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural settings. This is not surprising perhaps given that most immigrants to North America settle in urban areas: In the case of Canada 89% of immigrants live in urban areas (Beshiri, 2004). Despite these numbers the experience of the remaining 11% is important for two reasons. The adaptation experiences of immigrants in rural areas may be vastly different from their urban counterparts. We know, for example, that urban parts of Canada are more ethnically diverse than rural areas (Aizlewood &

Pendakur, 2005), so immigrants in rural areas are less likely to interact with people of their ethnicity or race. In addition, urban areas are more likely to have support services for newcomers whereas rural Newfoundland and Labrador has limited settlement services (Multiculturalism, 2007). The second reason understanding the rural immigrant experience is important is “[a]lthough the numbers are small, there has been increase in the ‘rurality’ of recently arrived immigrants compared to the overall immigrant population” (Akbari, Lynch, McDonald, & Rankaduwa, 2005, p. 23). Various governments are keen to have this trend continue leading scholars to call for more research in the area of rural immigrant life (Akbari, et al., 2005).

A second way this study serves to add to research is by recognizing the experience of immigrant-receiving communities and how it might interact with the immigrant experience. If it is true that “immigrant-receiving societies and their native-born populations have been massively-transformed in the past decades” (Berry, 2001, p. 616) exactly how have they changed? What kinds of accommodations might locals be willing to make for newcomers (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 52) and what social dynamics that are at play in that interaction (van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2010)? Unfortunately, research about immigration and adaptation, thus far however, has tended to ignore these interactions and the changes that happen in the dominant culture (Berry, 2001), however, this study aims to change that.

Finally, existing cultural adaptation research has offered engaging models and suggested important influencing factors and adaptation strategies (Berry, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007; Berry & Kalin, 1995; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Kalin & Berry, 1996; Kim, 1987, 2001, 2005; Kim & Gudykunst, 1988), however it has neglected to offer concrete ways that “people manage cultural differences in everyday life” (Collie, Kindon, Liu, & Podsiadlowski, 2010, p. 209). This study seeks to address the call for more qualitative work on immigration (Keshishian, 2000) and contribute to literature on the substance and nature of cultural adaptation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What has facilitated and hindered immigrant adaptation?
2. What changes have rural communities experienced due to the influx of new immigrants?
3. What things have been (are being) done in communities to facilitate adaptation?
4. What could be done and who is best suited to do what?

KEY TERMS

In order to adequately explore these questions, three key terms need definition: immigrants, locals, and rural.

- For the purposes of this study *immigrants* are persons who are or have been landed immigrants to Canada. By this definition immigrants may be recent arrivals or they may have been in the country for some time. They also may or may not be citizens of Canada. This broad definition allows for representation of people of various nationalities, levels of permanency in Canada, and years of adaptation experience.
- In order to describe those individuals who were born and raised in Canada the term *locals* will be used. In most cases these will be native-born Newfoundlanders,

- however, it also includes Canadians born in other provinces that now reside in rural Newfoundland.
- Finally, *rural* Newfoundland in this study will refer to all those communities that do not fall within the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of the northeast Avalon.

METHODS

For the purposes of this study interviews and focus groups have been the methods used for collecting data. Different methods offer different kinds of data. Interviews can teach us participants’ personal perspectives and experiences (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), they can elicit stories (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), and they can allow people to share things they might not want to in a group.

Interviews offer a depth and wholeness of understanding; however, focus groups offer a different kind of social interaction (Mason, 2002). Focus groups are important for this study as they allow the researcher to see if there is consensus or disagreement on a topic, story, or worldview (Creswell, 1998; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), In addition, we know that group dynamics can lead to data that might not otherwise emerge (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

SAMPLING TARGETS

This study endeavours to get a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds in both the interviews and focus groups. In order to accomplish this a system of quotas or targets have been developed so intentions are made tangible. These targets ensure minimum representation within both populations (immigrants and locals). For example, since a great number of immigrants are men working in the health care field there are target numbers for the number of women to be interviewed as well as the number of people who do not work in health care. In terms of local participants the study is ensuring a diversity of professions are represented as well as a mixture of those that have lived primarily within the province in addition to those that have worked outside of the province for a significant period of time.

SAMPLE STATISTICS

	INTERVIEWS	FOCUS GROUPS
Number conducted	17	6
Number of local participants	9	21
Number of immigrant participants	8	16
Number of female participants	10	24
Number of male participants	7	13

Number of countries immigrant participants are originally from: 7 (China, Croatia, England, France, India, Philippines, and Sri Lanka)

Range of time immigrant participants have been in Canada: Less than 1 year to more than 50 years

DATA ANALYSIS

The method of data analysis that was used for this study was a six-step rigorous thematic analysis based on the process recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). In this section I will explain why this approach is appropriate to my study and describe the six steps of thematic analysis: familiarization, initial coding, theme creation, theme review, theme naming, and production of the final product (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis is appropriate for this study because little has been written on the topic of immigrant adaptation in rural areas and the potential related community change; thematic analysis allows the data to speak for itself and ensures that the identified themes are data-driven. Secondly, thematic analysis is a flexible process which can “provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5); this offers opportunity for the researcher to better describe and interpret the experiences and meaning construction of the participants.

As mentioned earlier the thematic analysis I utilized has six specific steps. The first of these was *familiarization* during which I became fully immersed in the data by reading through the entirety of the transcripts (666 pages) taking note of initial comments and themes of interest. Then I moved on to *initial coding*. The code is “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998:3, in Braun & Clarke, 2006) and so I reread through the data “tagging” explicit or implicit features that seem somehow related to the research questions of the study using the NVivo software program to systematically mark and name pieces of text. This resulted in hundreds of codes. In the third step I carefully reviewed the long list of codes to see which might be related and which might come together as a larger theme. In this process of *theme creation* I took into account Owen's (1984) suggestions of what a researcher should look for: Recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness.

Given the enormity of the data in this third step I found it useful to sort the codes in physical form so I printed the codes, cut them into pieces and moved them around on a table to explore the relationships and hierarchies among the codes (Anderson & Felsenfeld, 2003). As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) at this stage I didn't remove any codes at this point as it was not yet clear what themes were important.

Step four saw a *thematic review* or a revising of the existing list of themes; the removal of some themes and the merging of others. This process required a full read of all the transcript segments that made up the codes to ensure that they accurately portrayed what was happening in the interviews and/or focus groups. When the thematic map seemed accurate I reviewed the tentative theme names to identify the “the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall), and [determine] what aspect of the data each theme captures” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 22). This *theme naming* step required that I was very clear on what the themes include and what they do not ensuring there are interesting and pertinent examples for each of the themes and giving each theme an interesting name. The final step of the analytic process was the *production of this final report*. The goal of the researcher in this final step is to present the data in a way that explains the complexity of the research, makes it interesting, brings the data “alive” with compelling excerpts, and with enough detail that the study is credible, dependable and transferable (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

RESULTS

This study highlights that the case of immigration to rural Newfoundland is both interesting and complex. In this section I will outline some of the key themes that emerged from this research as they relate to the study's four research questions. In answering these questions I endeavour to "stay true" to the study's participants' perspectives and experiences as much as possible. Not surprisingly, however, not all participants agree on what approaches might help or hinder immigrant adaptation, for example, so in those cases I will outline where the contestation lies and add the researcher's voice or interpretation as necessary. The role of researcher as interpreter is particularly important in answering the final research question which points to recommendations on what might be done (although the foundations of said recommendations are largely rooted in participants' ideas and experiences).

IMMIGRANT ADAPTATION: FACILITATION AND HINDRANCE

What has facilitated and hindered immigrant adaptation?

Seven themes emerged as particularly important to immigrants in answering the question "What has facilitated and hindered immigrant adaptation?" Those themes are Belonging and Connection, Acknowledgement, Urban to Rural Adaptation, Rare Intercultural Friendships, Offensive Approaches and Beliefs, Reminders of Difference, Professional Status, and Immigrant Drive. The first two themes were acknowledged as facilitators of adaptation, the next three hindrances, and the final two are either neutral or contested.

FACILITATION

Belonging and Connection

In talking about Newfoundland numerous immigrants talked about how friendly locals were. Ana Maria¹, for example, was very impressed at how welcome she felt when she arrived just a couple of years ago "The way we think, the way we act, it's all different but still, you know, the first time when I came in people were just open hands, they were just standing there with open hands ready to accept us. They were like 'come on in, you're welcome.'" Another immigrant named Manjeet described locals as "friendly and clean at heart."

As much as immigrants may appreciate the friendliness of local people, when they talk about belonging and connection, however, new immigrants in particular focus on the importance of the support and companionship they get from fellow immigrants, particularly those from their own national or ethnic group. They point out that immigrants offer both tangible and intangible support to each other; from lending each other money when finances are tight to offering the comfort one feels when we feel our beliefs and values are

¹ Please note: To ensure confidentiality all the participants have been given pseudonyms and the communities they live in will not be mentioned.

understood and appreciated. Amor has had a hard time making friends in the small community where her family has moved, so when she meets another immigrant, she explained, "I'll always give my number because I know how important it is to have a connection. Connection is really important... When I notice somebody's here new that's the first thing I will do, 'here's my number, call me.'"

"Connection is really important... when I notice somebody's here new that's the first thing I will do, 'here's my number, call me.'"

Amor, immigrant participant

It is obvious that the support immigrants get from each other can be invaluable particularly in the first few years of being in the country. One immigrant, in fact, said that had it not been for the social support offered by a friend from her country she would have left Newfoundland within her first year:

"I can tell you if [he] was not there I wouldn't have survived it. He was there supporting me by my side telling me 'It's going to be okay, I'm there with you.' If he wasn't there I would not know what to do. I would have actually gone back home. I would have given up."

As much as immigrants may appreciate the friendliness of Newfoundlanders it is clear that new immigrants in particular offer each other a sense of belonging and connection that they may not necessarily feel with the larger community (see *Interaction Rare and Reminders of Difference*).

Acknowledgement

The second facilitating theme that emerged from immigrant participant experiences is that of acknowledgement. In this context I use the word acknowledgement to encompass those ideas and / or actions that show thought towards "the other" and his or her experience (either an immigrant's thought towards a local person or vice versa). For example, two immigrant participants described very specific ways that they changed their approach to make local people more comfortable and/or to ameliorate their relationships with locals. Alejandro, for example, noticed that when he complained to a local friend about anything related to the community she would get offended. He didn't want her to take offense (as he loved a lot of other things about the town), so he learned to follow his complaints with "which also annoys me when it happens in Toronto" and his friend stopped taking offense to his negative comments.

Amor has similarly embraced another style of interacting with her colleagues at work. She's found that by making fun of herself in front of her colleagues (such as making light of her own embarrassing pronunciation mistakes) she has:

"made the people around me comfortable in laughing at me. Some people, especially amongst professionals, they don't know how culturally competent they are because they've never been immersed in a multicultural setting. So they would tend to try to be careful and walk on egg shells. So when I start cracking like that they let loose and then we get to know each other."

By changing the way they interact with their friends and colleagues these immigrants are responding to the perspectives of those around them, and therefore adapting to their new environment in a way that helps them in their interpersonal relationships.

Sometimes the thought given to the other is more tangible than a change of communicative approach. In an immigrant focus group Sara and Francis talked about how much they appreciated it when their neighbours offered them something they have fished or hunted. Sara shared "In my family there is not that much fishing going on but I always have salmon in my fridge because somebody always have a piece of salmon... they know I love fish so I am lucky, yes... I always have a neighbour that come back with a piece of salmon for me" Francis responded "Yeah, the guy next door does that as well. He's like 'do you like fish?' I'm like 'the kids love fish'...and he comes back with a few trout or something you know." The generosity of neighbours can make new immigrants feel welcomed as well as help them adapt to their new setting.

A local participant named Scott also talked about how much he appreciated being given something. In his case, priests who moved to his area from other countries and were making an effort to reach out to their parish through music. Scott said his community was very impressed. "They were making the first steps, and with the music and that, and it was very, very lovely thing... we love to be entertained. We do, it's human nature. Who doesn't want to be entertained...so that was a real eye opener for a lot of people...it was a different dynamic... we were recipients of a welcome and in your own town." Scott explained that by reaching out through music these new immigrants were able to build relationships faster with locals as many people in the surrounding communities had never known someone from another culture.

"And why shouldn't we learn how to say somebody's name? Most definitely! I mean you know there are some things that we don't bother about, that we sort of say 'oh well that's Joe, we'll just call him Joe' rather than go through having to say their name properly.. there are some things that we really should be more aware of..."

Ann, local participant

Finally, another local participant, Ann, acknowledged how local people might give more thought and effort to pronouncing immigrants' names properly. She pointed out:

"And why shouldn't we learn how to say somebody's name? Most definitely! I mean you know there are some things that we don't bother about, that we sort of say 'oh well that's Joe, we'll just call him Joe' rather than go through having to say their name properly.. there are some things that we really should be more aware of. It's that a person's name ... like I get really upset when people put an E on [Anne]. So how do people who immigrated feel that we're not even trying ... I mean you may not be successful but you've got to that relationship of saying, 'I don't know how to say it, tell me again you know and tell me until I get it right.'"

Ann suggests that by putting effort into pronouncing someone's real name (rather than giving them an English nickname) you show them that you have given thought to their perspective and that you feel it is important.

In summary, then, both locals and immigrants help immigrant adaptation by changing their communicative approaches with others, by giving something to a neighbour, by entertaining a community, and by showing effort in trying to use someone's real name.

HINDRANCE

Although there are things within rural Newfoundland that facilitate immigrant adaptation there are also things which hinder that same process. The four themes that emerged as hindrances are Urban to Rural Adaptation, Intercultural Friendship Sometimes Rare, Offensive Approaches and Beliefs and Reminders of Difference.

Urban to Rural Adaptation

One of the themes that expresses some of the challenges immigrants face in adapting to life in rural Newfoundland reflects the difficulty of moving from an urban to rural environment. Participants talked about a lack of food options and things to do as well as feeling geographically isolated. In fact, these challenges were discussed far more than climate.

In talking about food participants talked both about a lack of options for eating out as well as being unable to find the ingredients and spices they are accustomed to cooking with. Some immigrants go to great lengths to bring in what they need. Ana Maria explained "We literally have to fly in some of our spices from India... We had some friends coming over and we told them... we were like you don't bring anything else but just the spices...if you want clothes come here and get it, don't bring any from home; bring the spices."

"...if you're the type of person who can entertain yourself, if you don't need to have a horse and pony show coming to your door every day, you don't need Cirque Du Soleil...you'll love it, but if not, if your tastes are ...a little different...and you're more urban...you would find it boring."

Scott, local participant

Some participants also described a frustration with, what they felt, was a lack of things to do. Being from larger cities they were used to a lot of choice of places to go and things to see and rural areas often don't offer that. Local people pointed out several times that they thought that might be an issue for immigrants. For example, Scott explained it like this:

"...if you're the type of person who can entertain yourself, if you don't need to have a horse and pony show coming to your door every day, you don't need Cirque Du Soleil, you know if you don't need that and if the cup of tea in the kitchen is as good as the Starbucks to you...you'll love it, but if not, if your tastes are a little different...and you're more urban...you would find it boring"

Although there were immigrants who met Scott's description of finding rural life boring because they wanted to be entertained more (rather than making their own entertainment), there were some immigrants who had thrown themselves into local activities such as volunteering and hunting. There were others, as well, who expressed an interest in getting involved with local activities, but didn't feel they had the knowledge or connections to get started. For example, some immigrants were frustrated that in smaller communities local people tend to know what is going on and don't bother to advertise when an event is

happening or registration opens or closes for children's sports teams, for example. Francis talked about this assumed knowledge and how it relates to how tight knit Newfoundland communities can be:

"My wife and I joke about that all the time. It's like well "why would we need to advertise because everybody knows." It's like people will not indicate to turn or something and it's "well why would I need to indicate everybody knows I turn right on Friday at 4.00 pm...just ask Bob down the road he knows" and there is that ... But that's what I mean about the circles...you're trying to break into a circle. When you break into that circle of course you know that... [Bob] turns right but you don't know that until then."

Another immigrant made a similar link between knowing local people and an ability to do local activities. She expressed envy at another immigrant's having married into a local family:

"There was a man who came here...and he was married to somebody from here. So they have that connection. With that connection maybe they will be exposed in the families into fishing or boating or whatever. They have that connection. But people like me...we couldn't even get in...I don't know how to fish. Nobody's inviting me to fish."

So there are barriers to immigrants getting involved in local activities and this lack of things to do may sometimes feel compounded by geographic factors that limit how often immigrants can get together with each other. That is, many immigrants on the island live hours away from their compatriots reducing the social support and enjoyment they could get when they're together.

Intercultural Friendship Sometimes Rare

Adaptation to a new environment requires interaction with people in that environment. In fact, some academics go as far as to say that immigrant cultural adaptation only happens via communication with locals (Kim, 2005). That said immigrants and locals alike admitted that friendship between locals and new immigrants in particular can be rare and there appears to be a great amount of apprehension and hesitancy on both sides. As a result, immigrants, who lack the familial and friendship networks that locals usually have, can feel very socially isolated.

"It's kind of hard to make friends, like, real friends... Because I guess culturally it's different because I'm Filipino and they are Canadian, right?... They have their own friends and you're not allowed to be in that set of friends."

Melanie, immigrant participant

When immigrants move into a new country and community they sometimes move without family members and/or friends. However, the people within these communities usually have pre-existing relationships within the town and may not feel an incentive to include newcomers into their circle of friends; as much as immigrant participants understood this they also talked about how this dynamic was hard. As Melanie explained:

"I find here in [community] there are a lot of divisions. It's, kind of, hard to make friends, like, real friends, right? Because I guess culturally it's different because I'm Filipino and they are Canadian, right? But not all of them...are open to maybe having friends in a different country...They have their own friends and you're not allowed to be in that set of friends."

Alejandro agreed. He's found that "...people here are very friendly. But it does sort of seem like... it's a lot of interaction is basically friends and family" and as a single man with no local family he's found it hard to meet people because there are no specific places to go for that. Amor adds "if you're not a family member, you're not childhood friends, they don't have much time for you. So that was really... that was disheartening."

There may be any number of factors why intercultural friendships between locals and immigrants may be rare, but two that emerged from this study are extroversion and introversion and hesitancy and apprehension.

As humans some of us are outgoing and some of us introverted. Many participants (both locals and immigrants) suggested that being an extrovert can help an immigrant adapt because they will feel more comfortable making the first steps to meeting people. Marie, a come-from-away who moved to Newfoundland more than thirty years ago pointed out that in her community "you have to be outgoing... you've really got to make an effort because they tend just to go on their own. But I feel sorry for somebody who comes in here who is not outgoing...if someone comes in here [and they are not outgoing], they could basically be by themselves for eight and a half months that they're here." A self-described extrovert, Nagesh adamantly agrees that adaptation is up to the individual and his/her willingness to reach out:

"I don't need anybody's help so I always take initiative to interact with the people. If you step back...nobody can no matter how much help government offer for you to get adjusted to the culture, if you are not willing the government cannot do anything."

Some immigrants, however, have a harder time reaching out to people they don't know. Manjeet confessed that despite living in one Newfoundland community for more than a year "I haven't been into the community as such so I haven't interacted much with them [locals]." That said, his advice to new immigrants would be unlike what he's done himself: "go out and interact with people and try to absorb as much about them and interact and gather as much."

Many locals agreed that immigrants should take the initiative to meet local people and the majority of them suggested that getting to know your neighbours is a good first step. Mary said "I think Newfoundlanders are basically friendly enough to help anybody that asks, and you can start with the person next door... Because if they don't know and I know I'm more than too happy to help them out."

Thoughts of who should reach out to who is made further complex by the fact that there seems to be significant apprehension and hesitancy to reach out to those that are culturally different (particularly on the part of locals). Local participants talked about being worried about offending immigrants with too many questions and about not feeling comfortable inviting them over for supper. A local woman named Beth suggested "people are reluctant to take on something new that they know very little about for fear of doing something wrong, right? Offending...like you don't want to be doing things that are offensive so you may steer away from it." Jane supported this notion:

"I think that while people are friendly and people migrating here would see the town as a friendly town, I just don't know if there's that much intimate type of mixing where people are going over for supper and all that kind of

thing. And I think there might be a bit of hesitancy on the part of people who are from here to be involved with people who migrate here from somewhere else in that way in the sense that they feel that well, they eat different, I wouldn't have anything that they like and things like that."

Getting to know people of other cultures does take time and effort. Brad, who became close friends with an immigrant from his town when he was in university, expressed his frustration at the lack of effort his community made to get to know his friend.

"Now nobody really could pronounce his last name, I learned it because of course I had him as a roommate...so I knew his name, I knew lots of things about him but in the community nobody really knew anything about him and nobody went to visit...I mean I would go down and visit him on a regular basis but there were very few people that would take the time to go to find out who he was you know and to make friends with him."

Brad went on to say that his friend eventually separated from his Newfoundland wife and left the province. He feels how he was received in the community influenced his friend's decision to leave.

"...I guess the point is we know somebody who's different, we know they're in our community but very rarely do we take the time to go and find out who they really are as a person and I think that impacts whether people stay or leave."

Brad's story of his friend's experience echoes the story of social isolation that I heard from many new immigrants. One health professional finds that he doesn't have a lot in common with many local people and that after a year or so of being in the province he is already planning his departure. The only thing that keeps him occupied outside of work is a new group of immigrant friends he's made. "There was a time before I met these people like Fridays I used to be in tears like what do I do?"

"...I guess the point is we know somebody who's different, we know they're in our community but very rarely do we take the time to go and find out who they really are as a person and I think that impacts whether people stay or leave."

Brad, local participant

Hesitancy, apprehension, and a more reserved personality on the part of both immigrants and locals can reduce the amount of interaction that happens across cultures. As a result intercultural friendships are fairly rare (particularly with new immigrants) which increases an immigrants feeling of isolation and, in some circumstances, can lead to them leaving the province.

Offensive Approaches and Beliefs

The third theme of things that hinder immigrant adaptation is that of offensive approaches and beliefs. Although a couple of immigrants made it a point to say that they had never experienced discrimination or prejudice because of their nationality or race in the province, unfortunately others talked about offensive comments that were said to them or

others. Although rarely addressed directly participants suggested that these incidents made them feel less included, appreciated and/or understood. Some of these comments may be inadvertent and based in ignorance (rather than overt racism), however even those "innocent" comments can sometimes frustrate, anger and insult.

For example, one immigrant, Renee, was horrified when he heard the story of a friend who had been pushing a baby stroller in a small community. When a woman passed the pram and looked down at the baby, who was not white, she asked the mother "And will he be able to speak English when he grows up?" Although he laughed at the woman's ignorance it was clear that Renee was angered by this question. "I don't know if she was just dumb or she was being stupid or what," he mused "but that's a horrible thing to say, right?" In another interview Nagesh recounted episodes where he was asked by young people if people smoked pot in his country and if there were lots of terrorists there. Obviously offended, Nagesh added "They [young people] think that everybody is terrorist and everybody have a gun, you know."

Other stories participants told were about comments and events that were clearly more intentional in their approach. One local woman talked about racist comments her sister heard said about doctors' accents in a hospital, one immigrant nurse was rejected by a patient who decided he didn't want her to attend to him when he first set eyes on her, and another immigrant had a client complain to her about how she was sick of immigrants mooching off of the social support system. When she pointed out that she was also an immigrant the woman responded "oh no, but you are different. You have work."

To a non-immigrant these comments may seem random and sporadic, however, the potential consequences of these comments are great. Over time these experiences can accumulate and undermine other efforts to embrace diversity in our communities.

Reminders of Difference

Immigrants are keenly aware of the racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences between them and locals and they are often reminded of these differences in conversations with others. Although the intention is often innocent, these comments / questions can bother or hurt immigrants. For example, one immigrant who spent much of his life in another Canadian province pointed out that "as soon as you speak differently then they know that you're not one of them and you get treated somewhat differently."

Another experience locals with non-Newfoundland sounding names and immigrants of colour in particular face is the question "where are you from?" The participants that brought this up admitted to "playing little games" with this line of questioning. One local woman (who married an immigrant with a last name people would assume is "not from here") explained she answers something to the effect of "Twillingate. Don't you know the Hasanovics of Twillingate?" Although she's not from that community, she likes playing with the idea of what names are "from here" and which ones are not.

"I've lived in Canada for 50 [years]... so what odds... what difference does the first ten years of my life make, right?"

Renee, immigrant participant

Another participant, an immigrant, admits that while growing up in another province and since living here in Newfoundland he gets the "where are you from?" question often. Although he knows they want to know where his family was originally from, he always answers with the name of the community where he lives now. As he explains "...And they say, 'no, no, before that?' And what they're trying to get at is where are you originally from, right, but they don't ask you where you're originally from or what your ethnic background is. They dig away at it in little bits and pieces and hope that you'll volunteer... I don't volunteer it easily; I'll eventually talk about it but you have to keep at it for a long time. Because I figure like, you know, I'm almost 60 years old; I've lived in Canada for 50 of that, you know, so what odds... what difference does the first ten years of my life make, right?"

So, although this question "where are you from?" may seem innocent enough to some immigrants the result may be a feeling that they are not of this place, that they are not quite a part of their adopted community or country. This is only one example of how immigrants may be persistently reminded about how they are different and it may be hindering their ability, or willingness, to adapt to rural Newfoundland.

NEUTRAL OR CONTESTED

The preceding themes have discussed what factors and approaches may be helping or hindering immigrant adaptation in rural Newfoundland. The remaining two themes (Professional Status / Formal Education and Immigrant Drive) do not clearly point to helping or hindering adaptation, however, they are included here as they remain important factors.

Professional Status / Formal Education

The majority of immigrants in rural Newfoundland work in professional capacities and as a result they play important roles within their communities. In this study it was clear that there is a perception that because of their professional roles immigrants are treated better than they might be if they were less skilled and that their "high status" roles means they should have less difficulty adapting. As immigrant participant Frank pointed out "it's easier to assimilate when people look up to you than it is when they don't."

However, immigrants' professional status and high level of formal education might also set them apart from some locals. One CFA who works in a professional capacity mused about this as it related to him not being originally from the province:

"We're economically different than many of the people that we encounter on a daily basis. And I wonder sometimes if it's not so much our being CFAs that causes resentment...but they don't feel that we're one of them, not because we're from elsewhere, but we're from a different income bracket."

A born and bred Newfoundlander shared a similar thought about immigrants that had come through his community. Their level of formal education, he thought, set them apart and meant that they did not necessarily have a lot in common with some in the community:

"I got that impression from a lot of the really well educated folks who were coming through, that they may have been big fish in small pond..there's only so much times you can talk about the weather...now me I was quite happy to go down and talk to him [an immigrant doctor] or go down and

talk to Aunt Molly down the road and have a cup of tea with her, and you know so it didn't really matter to me, but I can see that that would be an issue for some folks."

It seems that the professional status of immigrants in their communities means they are often revered and/or appreciated, however this status (and the formal education that was needed to get there) may also set them apart in a way that may make forming relationships with some locals more difficult.

Immigrant Drive

The vast majority of immigrants that participated in this study were drawn to the province for employment. It is not surprising, then, that in talking to them immigrants highlighted the centrality of their work in their experience in the province. As Amor explained work is the most important factor: "the rest is insignificant, was insignificant, the focus is just to survive until I get settled with my job and the rest will just have to fall in place." Any number of other factors (social life, climate) can be accommodated or adapted to if one has good employment.

"See the thing is everybody says 'oh he's just come and he's making good money'...but he doesn't see that I came to Canada four years back, I had to work my ass getting into a university over here, I studied for two years and then I became a [health professional], I came here. So nobody sees that, it's like 'oh man he's a new immigrant and he's doing so well whereas we've been born, brought up and we're still ...'"

Feeroz, immigrant participant

Not all immigrants arrive with that "good employment" arranged however. Some will take service industry jobs in order to make money to go back to school so that their professional credentials will get recognized; others (such as foreign-trained physicians) are allowed to practice in this province, but often are simultaneously studying for their Canadian license. These processes take a significant amount of determination, time, money, and skill. Some immigrants shared, however, that some local people do not realize how hard their journey has been, that they are bewildered by their drive and in some cases are even jealous of their success. Feeroz explained:

"See the thing is everybody says 'oh he's just come and he's making good money'...but he doesn't see that I came to Canada four years back, I had to work my ass getting into a university over here, I studied for two years and then I became a [health professional], I came here. So nobody sees that, it's like 'oh man he's a new immigrant and he's doing so well whereas we've been born, brought up and we're still ...'"

Entangled with the idea of immigrant drive (and ambition to progress in their careers) is the perception that locals have that immigrants use the province as a stepping stone to another part of the country. Perhaps regardless of the accuracy of this assumption the fact that this perception exists (that immigrants are transient and have no intentions to stay long term) means that sometimes local people do not invest in getting to know them. As one local woman admitted locals might sometimes help immigrants to get settled "...but of course there's not much settling into that because they know they're leaving, right?" One

local man mused in a focus group that whether rural Newfoundland is a stepping stone may depend on how welcoming the community is:

"If they get a positive reaction then it may not be a stepping stone whatsoever, they could be very content and may stay for a very, very long time which we've seen those examples. I think if they get a cold reaction then yes it becomes a stepping stone and for us it may be a rationalization to say 'well they didn't stay because they weren't planning on staying anyway. It's nothing about us,' we'd not dare say that well we didn't do a good job in inviting them and helping them become good members of our community,' it was 'well they weren't planning on staying anyway, they were only trying to get to St. John's or Toronto or Vancouver' right. So we justify it."

Immigrant drive and ambition, then, may help immigrants adapt to their new workplaces and help them progress in their careers. However, the jealousy that some locals may feel and the widely held assumption that Newfoundland is just a stepping stone on their journey to a larger Canadian city may mean that it is harder for an immigrant to build social networks.

CHANGE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

What changes have rural communities experienced due to the influx of new immigrants?

Rural communities in this province have undergone huge changes in the last couple of decades and participants were eager to talk about it. They shared their perspectives on these changes: communities' existence being threatened by outmigration, more people working outside of their communities for work, the pace of life increasing, and people's social time becoming more formalized and less spontaneous. Among all these drastic changes, the changes due to immigration seem minute. However, they are there. Participants pointed out that there is increased exposure to people of different cultures, that there are social changes and cultural conflicts, and that some local people are taking it upon themselves to try to address these changes.

Increased Exposure to Different Cultures

Local participants talked about how their communities have seen the arrival of immigrants in roles such as clergy, teachers, and medical professionals. A couple of locals pointed out how they thought this increased exposure was helping people become more accepting. Michelle said that her communities in the 1980s only had "three different ethnic families living here and there's a lot more of that here now and there is more acceptance of people from away, than what it was.. So absolutely, it's improved."

"there's a lot more of [immigration] here now and there is more acceptance of people from away, than what it was.. So absolutely, it's improved."

Michelle, local participant

Other local participants, though, felt the province still has a long way to go in terms of understanding and welcoming immigrants:

"I think that awareness in communities that's not there. Like I said traditionally we're not used to having anybody coming into our communities other than maybe those of Irish or English descent or even Scottish because that's our heritage but anybody outside of that it's got to be a real challenge."

Immigrants who are not Irish or English are eager for local people to know more about who they are and what their culture is. One group I spoke to was really pleased that they had enough immigrants from their country in the region to hold a fundraiser. As one of the organizers explained:

"...that is a good thing for us to be aware and let them be aware that we exist...So in that kind of gathering at least there is the awareness and the promotion of us in [community] and other communities. That we are there and they are welcoming us and we are welcoming them..."

Local people also referred to multicultural events as a way to learn more about the people living in their communities. Jane admitted that when one happened in her community she was surprised at how diverse her town had become. "When you go there you think 'Oh, there's this many people living in [community]?' I didn't realize that. You know, who are from other countries."

Social Changes

Participants did talk about some social changes that they linked to an increase in immigration in their area. For example, one immigrant, Renee, was surprised to learn that some people in his community sometimes cook Thai and Indian food.

"They use it and like it - so that's how cosmopolitan it's become in a sense because people are introduced to other people and then it rubs off, right...It's nice around here that we can go to somebody's house and have a meal of curried chicken that *they* prepared."

Renee and his wife are also treated to traditional Newfoundland food when they visit friends, but he seemed particularly touched, and impressed, when his friends made the effort to cook food that he grew up with.

Also related to an increase in immigration is the question of what immigrants can do in their spare time. As addressed earlier immigrants that come from urban areas, in particular, often miss more choices for shopping, movies, and other cultural activities. However, interestingly, locals brought up the fact more often that there is "nothing for them [read: immigrants] to do"; in the same breathe they would talk about all the activities that locals do. Therefore, there seems to be a disconnect between how most locals want to spend their leisure time and how many immigrants might want to (or at least the perception of how they might want to). Some locals pointed out that value differences can be a barrier to immigrants joining existing organizations. One woman pointed out:

"...you see people still wanting them, 'we want you to join the Lions' you know and the Lions Club I mean is essentially when you look at the building the first thing you see is the bar, a lot of these people don't drink."

Another value (and behavioural) difference that participants suggested might be at play is that many people in rural Newfoundland spend a lot of their leisure time going out to the cabin, hunting, berry picking or working on a project of some sort. Frank, a long time immigrant, admits that he is more likely to stay indoors and read than to go out into the woods; he has found, though, that men in his community are into "more hands-on type things rather than sitting around talking about things or whatever... A lot of the men," he adds with amazement, "their idea of a good time is head out into the woods in winter and spend the day cutting down trees. And this is fun!" Frank made it clear in his interview that he was impressed by Newfoundlander's self-sufficiency, but he had to admit "I was never very good with wood." Jane, a local woman, suggested that to become more like Newfoundlanders immigrants would have to become more comfortable "at taking care of themselves and being self-sufficient... whereas I don't think a lot of people that come from away have those same skills."

Whether it is because they want to do similar things in their spare time or because of other cultural similarities, as mentioned earlier in this report immigrants often form their own communities. A lot of locals suggested that there were positive and negative aspects to that. On the positive side, local participants mused that having people of the same culture as you must help immigrants settle into their new home, that it seems to have helped with retention in some areas of the province, and that immigrants may have enough numbers to education locals about their culture. On the flip side, however, some local participants worried that larger groups from a single country, by virtue of sticking together, may adapt less to the local culture. In one focus group, however, someone pointed out that staying with

people whose culture you share in not something unique to immigrants. "Yeah go anywhere because if you put us in that you just flip it" (second participant: "Yeah. Well you send Newfoundlanders to Fort McMurray and they just take over, right? [laughter]). Newfoundlanders understand the comfort of being surrounded by people whose language and culture you understand and appreciate.

Cultural Conflict

Increasing diversity in Newfoundland communities and workplaces means that there is sometimes what one local participant called a "tussle of cultures." The two cultural differences that were brought up most often by participants, both locals and immigrants alike, were beliefs as they relate to women and religion. One local woman who works in health care said

"some of the culture that they come with is so different from what our culture is. You know like how their perception of female patients and...a type of escorts that they need when they're treating females and those types of things. And even like a female professional working with some of the professionals there's a difference. So there's a real learning there that has to happen."

One local man in the same focus group suggested that this "tussle of cultures" is not "fighting or clashing ... it's just taking the people, us and somebody, an immigrant, a while to adjust."

"some of the culture that they come with is so different from what our culture is. You know like how their perception of female patients and... a type of escorts that they need when they're treating females and those types of things. So there's a real learning there that has to happen."

Ann, local participant

In addition to actual social changes that can have clear links to immigration there is also a lot of resistance to changes that have happened in Canada that participants *perceive* is because of immigration. In a couple of interviews and focus groups immigrants, and Muslim immigrants in particular, were blamed for a perceived decline in Christianity in schools and other organizations. One immigrant complained:

"In school you're not allowed to say Merry Christmas anymore, it's Season's Greetings. It's because for some immigrants, well, should I say Muslims, that they feel that they are being, what do you call that, disrespect in regards to saying Merry Christmas because it's Christianity. And they think that they have the right to belong and you're not allowed to say Merry Christmas anymore, it's Happy Holidays or Season's Greetings."

Other local participants cited Islam as the reason why the Lord's Prayer is no longer said in schools and why God has been removed from the Girl Guide's motto. Some participants talked about how they were upset by these changes and that they felt Canadians are trying to change too much to include some immigrants: "If they would learn our culture too it might be easier on them instead of us trying to change so much for everybody else." It was obvious

from comments like these that some immigrants may be more welcome than others if only partially due to a perception that Canadians are being asked to change who they are.

Locals Addressing Change

As much as there were indications of intolerance in some interviews, there were also stories of much kindness and generosity as individuals worked to help immigrants in their communities. For example, one local woman, who worked with an immigrant doctor, took the initiative to offer her services as a babysitter consistently so that the man and his wife could study for their Canadian licensing exams; a teacher integrated the religion of a new immigrant child into their world religion class by inviting the family to share their beliefs and songs. "I think it really gave the kids a deeper appreciation for her and her family," she explained. "And after that the other kids were more friendly with her...because they understood a bit more."

"I mean [immigrant woman's name] was frightened to death!... so she [hair stylist] would put her appointment at a time where there was nobody else scheduled to come in and she would lock the door...She honoured her needs."

Sasha, local participant

In some cases local people were able to help new immigrants by helping them find a business that would be willing to service them in keeping with their cultural beliefs. A local woman named Sasha met a Muslim woman at the library one day and on talking to her realized that she had "all kinds of questions, simple things like where do I get my hair cut, in a place where she could take her scarf off." So Sasha set to work to find a hairdressing salon run by a woman that could respect the woman's wishes. The woman she found:

"was very good to her...She made sure that everything was closed off, so no men would come in at the time... I mean [immigrant woman's name] was frightened to death!... so she would put her appointment at a time where there was nobody else scheduled to come in and she would lock the door...She honoured her needs."

Individual acts of kindness and inclusion such as these can make a big difference in how new immigrants settle in our rural communities.

COMMUNITY EFFORTS TO FACILITATE ADAPTATION

What things have been (are being) done in communities to facilitate adaptation?

One of the topics of discussion in the focus groups and the interviews was what sorts of events, activities, and/or approaches were happening in communities that helped adaptation and/or helped immigrants and locals get to know each other's cultures. The following outlines participant responses (which range from welcome wagon packages to cultural fairs to organized hockey games).

Please note: this list is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but instead represents those efforts that study participants know about.

Multicultural Events

Many participants talked about multicultural events as one major way locals and immigrants have been sharing their cultures. The events that were mentioned were either events organized at schools (for students) or community-wide events.

School events included the annual heritage fairs where children shared ethnic heritage projects and multicultural days that saw kids dress up in various cultures' clothing and try foods from around the world.

The major community-wide event that was mentioned was the multicultural fair held by the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador. In recent years the event has been held in a couple of communities around the province and local participants said it was "a really good event that brought some realization to [multiculturalism]." Although these sorts of events are done only annually participants talked about it as being a good learning opportunity. As one woman explained the multicultural food fair gives people from the area an opportunity to experience things for the first time:

"...they didn't grow up with multiculturalism, they didn't have Thai restaurants or you know Filipino restaurants or Italian... They never had these things to experience so to them it's foreign so it's no fault of theirs if they never had the opportunity to be exposed, so this is giving residents an opportunity to get exposure, to appreciate the food, the crafts, you know, the history, the culture of the people that are living here now and it gives them an opportunity to share their stories and to create friends. And I think that's really important."

Welcome Packages

A couple of participants talked about how their municipalities or regional development associations are creating materials that either help attract newcomers to the area (such as an immigration portal) or help orient them once they arrive. The latter materials include information such as how to get an MCP card and how to call emergency services, etc.

A couple of communities visited in the study have also taken upon themselves to create welcoming packages which include materials such as maps, garbage schedules, and activity guides to the local area. In the case of both communities, however, there was no coordinated way to know who was arriving when. One municipal worker read about a new manager coming into town. She knew the town doesn't have a welcome wagon, but she knew someone working at the manager's business so she "thought we should take that on

ourselves." She took the initiative to get the man's address and hand deliver the package. "We should be doing that for everyone," she added. "He loved it. He thought that was fantastic." She was glad that there is a new newcomer's guide (developed by the Association for New Canadians) and she looks forward to adding that so "they'll have the complete package."

Employment Support

When Nagesh came to Newfoundland he did not have a job. However, he knew he had transferable skills and training from his home country, so he visited Human Resources Development Canada and told them he was qualified to work in the hospital and "if I don't get a job I will be forced to move to another place in search of a job." The person he spoke to said he would see what he could do and soon after he got a call from the hospital for an interview. "So he really helped me in that case and they also helped...to get adjusted." He admitted, however, that he feels immigrants don't know that those services exist:

"There are lots of people who are ready to help us who work in different department in there but most of the people that also came over here don't know that there is a facility that government offers you to help you. But if you know about that, yeah, that is a wonderful thing."

"There are lots of people who are ready to help us...but most of the people that also came over here don't know that... But if you know about that, yeah, that is a wonderful thing."

Nagesh, immigrant participant

English as a Second Language Classes

Many participants talked about how essential learning English is as part of the adaptation process. Some immigrant participants arrived before English as a Second Language (ESL) services existed in the province and at that time there was "absolutely no support...It's a jump in the water and learn to swim" as one a long time immigrant pointed out. However, things have improved in that realm and one local participant pointed out that the Association for New Canadians has paid for an ESL teacher to help new immigrants in their community.

Meet and Greet Events

Larger employers in larger communities (such as the various health authorities and educational institutions) sometimes hold meet and greet events for employees and their families. These events offer a fun and casual way for immigrants to get to know locals and vice versa. One new arrival was invited to a open hockey game for all staff, family and friends and despite not knowing how to play he had fun and met a lot of people. A local woman attended a meet and greet for spouses of physicians, an event she's been to many times, and she was surprised to find:

"...spouses from all over the world who really didn't know anybody. Just to have that exposure to them and to sort of start talking with them and

learn how things were different for them as opposed to me as a spouse was really interesting and I thought 'b'y I have a lot to learn here.'" In many cases an immigrant's place of employment is his / her main inroad into the larger community and so these events offer a chance for both to learn about the other and hopefully build relationships that will continue beyond the event.

Organized Talks

Participants also spoke about how much they had learned when an institution or organization had invited an immigrant in to talk about their culture and/or religion. In one case a church invited a well-respected physician in to talk about Islam. Sasha, a woman who attended the event, was very impressed by it because it helped dispel the stereotypes that she had heard on television about "terrorism and all that foolishness." Hearing this man talk, she said, "was really an interesting evening....In telling us about Islam and how similar we were and that's the thing that came out of it is that we were more similar than we were different."

Individual Efforts

As mentioned earlier many efforts to help immigrants adapt are at the individual level. These efforts are not coordinated in any way, but are simply "individuals who are reaching out to individuals" out of the kindness of their own hearts. In the case of the woman who looked after a doctor's kids (see *Locals Addressing Change*) the family became so close to her that after they left the province they invited her to go up to attend their citizenship ceremony.

Participants also talked about having friends and neighbours over for supper. Raju and Veera said that it was through these casual sorts of get together that they were able to talk about their culture so their friends "realize our culture, family...our food." In another example, a gift of a big container of fresh crab from a family member inspired a local couple to invite an immigrant couple over for supper who then reciprocated and had them over for crab curry.

In some cases people organize larger events at their homes. Diane, for example, had met people at a multicultural event and decided to invite them and their families over for a get together. She admits that it was a lot of work, but she "loved it because the kids could get together and play." Despite being different ages and having varying levels of English "It doesn't matter with kids. They just find their way."

RECOMMENDATIONS

What could be done and who is best suited to do what?

Given the demographic and economic benefits that immigration can bring to a province like Newfoundland and Labrador and the agencies that have mandates to increase the recruitment and retention of immigrants, immigration is likely to continue to grow in the province. Some of this growth will be felt in rural communities far from St. John's where the province's only settlement organization is based. Although the Association for New Canadians has extended its reach across the province in several ways the limitations of geography mean that it will be difficult for that organization alone to reach all new immigrants. What, therefore, can other institutions such as the provincial government, municipalities, employers, private companies, and service organizations do to help in the adaptation of new immigrants?

The following recommendations are based on discussions with immigrant and local participants from across the island. Some are "low-lying fruit" and others may require longer term planning. Two qualifiers: The recommendations have been divided into sections according to what institutions might be best qualified to do what. That said, it may be that other organizations' / institutions' mandates and processes might be more equipped to tackle a particular task. Also, it may be that some part of these recommendations refer to tasks that are already in the works (unbeknownst to the researcher). If that is the case, the organization is to be commended.

"I think everyone probably, from the Town through to the Province, could do more with helping with the integration of immigrants."

Michelle, local participant

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Continue to support multicultural fairs - Locals and immigrants alike talked about the importance of these events. Immigrants appreciated the venue for sharing their cultures, and locals the opportunity to learn and experience something new. In fact, some people thought that these sorts of events could happen more often (such as being linked to various cultural events and festivals such as Easter, Hanukah, or Oktoberfest) and could be bigger (two participants referred to Regina's Mosaic as a great template).

There are a couple of factors that are important to mention as they related to these types of events, however:

- First of all, it is important that they don't become a forum for a hyper focus the different and the exotic. One local woman, who is the mother of two children of colour, said sometimes she finds that multicultural events frame themselves too much around difference and that may sometimes give people permission to judge the differences. For example, she's heard comments such as "oh, my god, look what those guys eat!" and "oh, I could never live like

that. Imagine." It might be useful to frame the event as an exploration of similarity as well as difference.

- Secondly, although it is most important at multicultural fairs to highlight those cultures we know less about, it is also important to include the cultures that are "native" to this province as well (aboriginal and non-aboriginal). Too often dominant culture is invisible to those that are in it; including a Newfoundland and Labrador table right between Mexico and Norway would help locals and immigrants alike place themselves within a larger cultural context.
- Finally, if possible it would be great if these multicultural fairs are not just a one-off, but that somehow they are a catalyst for continued cultural discussions or activities (such as international cooking lessons or friendship associations or Bollywood dance lessons).

Recognize the contribution of immigrants and people of colour to the province -

Traditionally speaking the majority of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have been of European ancestry. As a result the image that many people in the province have of someone "from here" is of someone who is white. Given our aboriginal population and our changing demographics due to immigration it is important that we try to expand our self-image to be more inclusive. Approaches such as an ad campaign to highlight the contribution of immigrants and people of colour (born in the province) might help curtail assumptions (by some) that immigrants are "taking" rather than "giving" to local communities and institutions. Some of these stories could be "people of distinction," but perhaps it might be just as important to show examples of people who in many ways fit our ideas of what a born and bred Newfoundlander might be. Many great testimonials and stories have already been collected for the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism's promotional material and perhaps these ads could piggyback on that existing work.

Encourage the creation of more multicultural groups - Every community that was visited expressed an interest in having a multicultural organization that might spearhead some of the sorts of events, activities and processes that are outlined in these recommendations. As will be discussed earlier, most participants felt that immigration-related services specific to a community might be best grown out of that community. As well, as one immigrant pointed out, immigrants have to be a key component to building these groups as "the ones that are coming to a place will have more of awareness of what needs to be done. We should have more voice in terms of promoting the change that we need for us...we cannot just rely on the people around us to accommodate us, we have to speak for ourselves." That said, including locals in these associations is essential as well. They have connections within the community and may find it easier to navigate local institutions and funding organizations, for example, than new immigrants.

Explore whether privacy regulations would allow the sharing of immigrants' contact information - Several immigrants talked about how they would have loved to have had the name and number of a person from their ethnic group before arriving in Newfoundland, but particularly on their arrival. These participants were aware that privacy regulations might not allow it, but they were willing and eager to be a resource for people from their country (from helping them know what to pack to being a friendly face upon their arrival to, in some cases,

offering them a place to stay until they get settled). They know from personal experience that this will make a big difference for newcomers:

"It's a big relief to know that we have people around here, having our own cultural... our own community around here. So I always say when a new person, when they are actually planning to come over they should know that they have a community over here. And at least they should have contact details...it gives them a big relief; I'm telling you it gives them a big relief when they come to know that we are there."

Encourage intercultural inclusion in pre-existing community events - A couple of participants talked about how much they enjoyed the addition of different cultural approaches to existing community events such as the Hindu Temple's food at the St. John's Regatta, British films as part of the Cupids 400 lecture series, and the visiting international choirs that travel to smaller communities as part of Festival 500. Scott, a local participant was impressed by a lecture he attended in St. John's around Guy Fawke's Night that discussed bonfires from different cultural perspectives. One Hindu gentleman was talking about his cultural connection to fire and Scott said that there were "probably 20 people in the room but those 20 people went away with a new perspective."

EMPLOYERS & GOVERNMENT

Create a welcoming environment for new immigrant employees - There are a number of things that can be done to create a more welcoming environment for new immigrant employees. They include ensuring a good first impression (such as picking them up at the airport and ensuring they have their basic needs met), providing an orientation at work, and offering cross-cultural training for all employees.

"as soon as you land in the airport somebody should meet you and introduce you to a couple of people or, you know, just bring you to your hotel or something like that. Just to get you settled and you go on your own."

Millicent, immigrant participant

Many immigrant employers seem to not understand how challenging it can be for new immigrant employee to arrive in a new country and workplace. A couple of participants talked about how disorienting and discouraging it was to arrive in Newfoundland with no one to greet them and with no real knowledge on how to get around and get things done. One participant, who was moving to the province for a job she had been recruited for, described her first few weeks as far from pleasant. When she flew into the province she made her way through a snow storm to a hotel that was "alien and small" and later moved into a dark basement apartment. Someone lent her a blanket and an "inflatable mattress without the pump, which means I spread it on the floor and I slept on the floor." She used her clothes as a pillow, sat on the floor and lived off \$10 for a week until her banking situation was sorted out. Had her employer realized how desperate her situation was they no doubt would have helped her, however, as she explained in her culture you shouldn't appear

needy and she already felt indebted for the job. Asking for more would have been rude and so she stayed silent and waited for things to improve.

New immigrants that are coming to the province for work should be, at a minimum, greeting at the airport. As one woman suggested "as soon as you land in the airport somebody should meet you and introduce you to a couple of people or, you know, just bring you to your hotel or something like that. Just to get you settled and you go on your own." That first impression can help shape how they feel about the place and its people as well as how well they are able to adapt to their new life.

Offer an initial orientation and ongoing support avenues for new immigrant employees - In our increasingly face-paced world employees are often brought into organizations without a proper introduction to policies and procedures and an orientation to the environment and its people. These orientations are useful at the best of times and are invaluable when the new employee is coming from a drastically different context.

New immigrants in particular would benefit from an orientation which outlines local work practices, cultural norms, and offers them a forum within which to ask questions. Several immigrant participants explained that they are very appreciative of the work they have here and sometimes this manifests in not wanting to ask for further assistance (for fear of looking needy or ill prepared for their position) therefore employees may want incorporate processes that allow for ongoing discussion and feedback on their adjustment to this new setting. Finally, some immigrant participants in this study were affected by incidents of intolerance and racism, so employers should consider what avenues exist for talking about and dealing with such issues.

Offer cross-cultural training for staff - It is important that those institutions that hire immigrants (such as health authorities) and those that deal with immigrants as front-line workers be given an opportunity to increase their cross-cultural competence, but also their level of comfort in working with those that are culturally different from them. Many Newfoundlanders have not had a lot of exposure to other cultures and so there is a huge gap in some people's understanding and knowledge.

Given that the province (and various employers within the province) are recruiting employees internationally effort should be made to ensure that these institutions are ready to receive immigrant employees. Cultural tension or misunderstandings in the workplace at a minimum can create stress and reduce efficiency, but can become much larger problems if not dealt with early.

"I think Central Health does some things when there's a new doctor like... I've heard things... about efforts they make too, but it seems like it's not enough, you know. It's not enough in the sense of the need."

Margaret, local participant

One immigrant medical professional reported that the cultural differences in her workplace had negatively affected her work. She argued that hospital employees "should come to

know...what is our culture, what we think about before they actually are given a chance to train us. The way we think, the way we act is different." She added that "most of the time the mentors, when they come in, they have no idea what we are or what we think... because the way we worked back home is different, when we are put into our new environment, a new surrounding, it takes time for us to kind of adjust to it...So they should know that."

The status quo appears to be frustrating for both locals and new immigrants. Both groups are struggling through their differences without quite knowing what they are. As Ana Maria put it "they know there is a difference but they don't know what is the difference."

Create an agency (or policies and procedures) to protect the rights of temporary workers - This study focused on the experience of immigrants, however, the number of temporary workers in the province is also growing and many of those workers hope to later apply to be permanent residents. As a result, it is important to quickly address the fact that some temporary workers in the province are being treated unethically. Participants were aware that they were being taped and, therefore, did not want to get into specifics, however, some immigrant participants were angry about how their temporary worker friends were being treated. One person reported their friends as being "traumatised" by their treatment by Newfoundland employers and asked the researcher to "make sure there is commitment and support and so ensure that employees are being well looked after no matter what...I think that is of very, very vital importance." Immigrant participants were worried that "if you're not here as a permanent resident then you basically have no rights because they can pull it over your head and, 'okay, you can go back home anytime because you're here on a temporary basis' and that is the biggest struggle of all."

MUNICIPALITIES

Create a forum for municipalities to share best practices - Municipalities have a lot on their plates and as much as they might want to better address immigrant needs when it's "not on your radar you kind of push it aside and go onto something else," as one local participant put it. Some communities "just don't know what to do and they're just struggling," but if there was a forum through which municipalities could learn best practices that had worked elsewhere it might help people know where to start. As Brad pointed out "I really think people are willing to, they just aren't sure how to."

Establish a Municipal Welcoming Strategy - Municipalities would be wise to create their own welcoming strategies. Below are some related ideas that merged out of this study:

Have a mayor's breakfast once or twice a year for all new residents. Although it should be framed as a welcome for new residents local people should be invited (from plumbers to politicians to teachers). This event could be an opportunity to share more about the town, to establish relationships among residents and to formally recognize the contribution of all community residents, both "new" and "old."

Create a first point of contact for new residents - Having a first point of contact at the town would give new residents someone to speak to about their everyday needs such as who do you talk to get your driveway shovelled or what is happening in town that might kids might enjoy. This individual would not have to be dedicated to this task, but just having someone whose role it was to occasionally answer those questions would be helpful. One immigrant who was a foreigner in another country before moving to Canada said that in that country there was a service that foreigners could apply to have a local person visit them and answer questions about where everything was in the community.

First Visit: Welcoming Package - Soon after a new immigrant arrives in a community someone from the community should visit and deliver a welcoming package (such as those described earlier). This would also give an opportunity for early questions to be answered.

Second Visit: Following Up - At the one or two months mark it would be wise for a community member to follow up and see how the immigrant / family is doing. The first few months in a new country can be stressful, particularly if the immigrant has arrived in winter. One immigrant participant, who had spent time in Canada before and speaks English as a first language, confessed that "the initial month or two was quite hard trying to ... because you're trying to get into a routine...we're in this small place and you don't want to watch TV all the time but there's nothing else to do because you don't know where to go or what to do. So the first couple months for me at least were very, very stressful, very stressful actually."

Third Visit: Winter Check In: During an immigrant's first winter in the province it might be a good idea to have a volunteer visit their house to check on them. As one local participant explained:

"When the snow gets nine feet tall, have them go out to some of these people's places. How are you? Would you like to come over for a cup of tea or something like that? ...I love winter and so does my wife, so we don't have a problem, but know to some people it's a shock when we get that snow around here...And so just check in on them is what I'm saying and just kind of touch point and just 'how are you?'" 'Do you need someone to shovel that?'"

The above visits could be done by a municipal employee or perhaps they could be taken on by a service organization, a senior's group, or a buddy program (*see below*).

Services for spouses - Many new residents (immigrants and non-immigrants) arrive with spouses who do not have employment and the willingness of a family to stay may depend on the happiness and well being of that spouse. Assisting spouses create relationships within the community (both with institutions for employment services and individuals for social support) would be a worthy investment.

Create signs at airports - Given that many immigrants move into cities and that there is no official notification that they have joined the community, it might be a good idea for community's airports and tourism chalets have a sign that says "Have you newly moved to Gander? We would like to help you settle into our town, so feel free to contact ____ for a welcome package and an opportunity to have your questions answered."

Encourage organizations and businesses to promote their activities, lessons, events, etc. - As mentioned earlier new residents to small communities (both "come-from-aways" and new immigrants) have found that they aren't privy to a lot of information that locals take for granted - such as the names of streets that don't have street signs to the registration deadline for skating lessons to when the fire hall is having its annual fundraising dinner. Ensuring that these things are promoted in something like an events page in the newspaper means that no one is accidentally excluded.

Form a subcommittee that focuses on issues related to new residents - Establishing a subcommittee dedicated to issues related to new residents could help address many of the issues and opportunities mentioned above. The committee might start its work with a public "new citizens panel" made up five newcomers and five long-time residents whose goal it was to share their perspectives on the community as well as learn what issues were of most importance to immigrants and locals alike.

NON-PROFITS AND SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Buddy program - Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are known for being friendly, helpful and generous people. Some people, however, are more hesitant and apprehensive to reach out to those that speak another language or who are culturally different from them. Therefore, it might be a good idea to give structure to some intercultural encounters.

A buddy program, run by a non-profit, could see immigrants and locals be carefully matched (for common interests and hobbies, for example). The program could be as simple as having the buddies meet once a month for three months. The first meeting could be as part of a larger gathering for tea and a casual chat, the second could be an outing where the local buddies can introduce their immigrant buddy to a local activity or event (as simple as a local festival or activity such as berry picking) and the third could be a getting to know you lunch (a volunteer coordinator could supply potential questions they might want to ask each other). This structure can help reduce the apprehension that one might offend the other by doing or saying the wrong thing. These friendships might extend beyond the end of the program and reduce the social isolation that some immigrants feel. As one local participant put it "maybe if they had a buddy or something like that when they come into town that they could buddy up with, that would take them to the different places, or be there with them so they wouldn't feel so alone when they go [to community events]...I think they'd feel a little more comfortable."

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Mabel, local participant

Newfoundland "cultural immersion" - Some immigrant participants expressed an interest in doing local activities such as fishing or going out for a ride in a boat, but they don't have the tools or the knowledge to do it. As one immigrant pointed out an introduction to local activities for doctors in Labrador has helped with retention, so it might be a useful thing to implement in smaller Newfoundland communities.

Invite immigrants to share their perspectives / skills - Community organizations from Rotary clubs to embroidery groups could invite immigrants to share their skills, experience and knowledge at their meeting and events.

Increase distribution of Newcomers Guide - The ANC's Newcomer's Guide was only recently published. To further extend its reach it would be a good idea to put it in spots where immigrants have to visit in their first few days in town (such as the post office, MCP and DMV offices). Having this resource available is wonderful as several immigrants talked about the struggle of how to find out to apply for MCP, and how to get snow tires put on, registering a car, and what they would need to prepare for winter, etc.

RECOMMENDATION ON APPROACH

Many participants suggested that the best role for the Province would be two-fold. To fund worthy initiatives that were community-based (allowing communities to create programs and activities that are specific to their needs) and helping build the capacity of municipalities to deal with immigration-related issues. Some participants worried that:

"If you're waiting for communities to self identify without that level of initial support to build some understanding and awareness and capacity it just doesn't happen. That's why we haven't seen it happen because people are reluctant to take on something new that they know very little about for fear of doing something wrong...like you don't want to be doing things that are offensive so you may steer away from it. But if you had someone who could help build your knowledge and capacity you know with existing leaders then there may be some ownership to take advantage of the funding that's out there and do something that makes you a welcoming region."

Leadership from the Province is important, but participants were very clear that the approach needs to be collaborative. In some cases, community representatives mentioned that they felt that the responsibility for immigration-related issues had been "downloaded" on to them. Unfortunately, in some cases this meant that things are at a standstill because municipal leaders weren't sure where to go from there.

FINAL WORDS

Although immigration to rural Newfoundland may be happening at a rate much slower than what is seen in more urban Canadian areas understanding that rural experience is an essential part of increasing immigrant retention. This study is one step towards further understanding that adaptation experience and the recommendations herein seeks to help address how immigrants and communities might move forward together in this process of change.

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