NEW START FOR YOUTH STUDY:

An Examination of the Settlement Pathways of NewcomerYouth

Prepared by

Susan S. Chuang, University of Guelph

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Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance /

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CISSA/ACSEI is a national ortganization formed in March 2005 to represent the issues and expertise of the immigrant settlement sector to advance public policies and programs that enhance the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees to Canada. CISSA / ACSEI envisions a Canadian Society in which all immigrants and refugees are able to participate fully in society.

Susan S. Chuang is an Associate Professor in the Department of Family Relations an Applied Nutrition, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario.

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Acknowledgements

Susan S. Chuang, Researcher   Chris Friesen, Chair
University of Guelph   *CISSA/ACSEI*

Executive Summary

Over the past several decades, the demographic landscape of Canada has greatly transformed into an ethnically diverse population. Almost one of every five Canadians is an immigrant, with 36% of immigrants (390,800) representing immigrant and refugee children and youth 24 years of age or under (Statistics Canada, 2006). Although the cultural patterns of Canada have changed over the years, there remains a paucity of research on how newcomer youth adjust and settle into their new homeland.

Adolescence is a particularly vulnerable period of time as individuals undergo significant developmental transitions (e.g., physiological and emotional changes, increased desires for independence). With these prevalent adolescent challenges, newcomer youth must deal with additional challenges such as negotiating their lives within various multicultural environments and cultures (e.g., family, school, and community). However, these stresses of adjusting and settling in a new country that youth experience, especially their coping strategies, have received limited attention.

More recently, service providers, school adminstrators, and social science researchers have increasingly acknowledged that communities across Canada need to do more to support and guide immigrant and refugee youth. Over the past 15 years, immigrant serving agencies have been proactive in responding to newcomer youth's needs, although often through piece meal, short-term projects.

With financial support from the Department of Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism, CISSA/ACSEI launched this study as part of Phase II of a pan Canadian project to help inform agencies across Canada on the challenges that immigrant and refugee youth have experienced and the coping strategies that they have used to deal with their

settlement and adjustment process. This study builds on an earlier Discussion Paper undertaken in March 2009 entitled, *New Start: Immigrant Serving Agencies' Perspective on the Issues and Needs of Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Caada,* that examined the challenges and issues faced immigrant and refugee children and youth from the perspective of immigrant serving agencies across Canada. The second phase of our work provides a first-hand account on how 125 newcomer youth from 30 countries navigated through their everyday lives in Canada. Such accounts will better inform agencies on effective and culturally responsive services and programs for immigrant and refugee youth. The paper, entitled, ***New Start for Youth Study***, is divided into five main sections:

- Newcomer Youth's Challenges and Issues;

- Newcomer Youth's Perspectives of Families' Challenges and Issues;

- Newcomer Youth's Coping Strategies;

- Advice for Incoming Newcomer Youth; and

- Future Directions.

Newcomer youth from five provinces (Alberta, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Québec) were asked about their personal adjustment and settlement experiences in Canada. They were also asked, from their perspective, the settlement challenges that their families experienced. Youth also provided information about the coping strategies that they used to deal with their challenges and barriers. Advice for incoming newcomer youth was also probed.

A national framework within CIC for youth is imperative to ensure that all newcomer youth are successful in adjusting into their schools, communities, and Canada. With the perspectives of youth, we will be in a better position to provide more effective programs and services in a more unified and consistent fashion across all provinces.

New Start for Youth Study:

An Examination of the Settlement Pathways of Newcomer Youth

Over the past several decades, the demographic population of Canada has greatly

transformed. Most striking is the influx of recent immigrant families into Canada, which

currently has the second highest immigration population in the world. Almost one of every five

Canadians is an immigrant, with 36% (390,800) representing immigrant and refugee children and

youth 24 years of age or under (Statistics Canada, 2006). As the young population lead the way

for a "new" Canada, it becomes imperative for researchers, service providers, and social

policymakers to investigate the multiple challenges and barriers that newcomer youth face as

they navigate through their adjustment and settlement processes.

Especially for adolescents, individuals undergo significant developmental

transitions and changes (e.g., puberty, increased levels of independence) during this particular

period of life. Psychosocial stresses as created by settlement challenges and barriers, and the

ways in which individuals cope with these circumstances are central concepts for understanding

newcomer youth. *Stress* is defined as the environmental situations that threaten, challenge,

exceed, or harm the psychological or biological capacities of the individual (Cohen, Kessler, &

Gordon, 1995). However, there is a tendency of researchers and service providers to focus on the

negative aspects of immigration (e.g., difficulties in adjusting and creating social network), with

little attention, if any, on how newcomers respond to and cope with these stresses.

Building on an earlier discussion paper (March 2009) that examined the settlement

challenges faced by immigrant and refugee children and youth from the perspective of immigrant

serving agencies in Canada, this study provides a more in-depth understanding of the settlement

processes from newcomer youth themselves as well as also investigating the ways in which they strategized to cope and deal with those various situations. Coping, as defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), is "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p. 141).

The primary goal of this study was to provide a starting point for us to gain greater insight into the adjustment and settlement processes for newcomer youth. Thus, this report is based on the findings from this study and is not intended to compare our current findings with past studies. Using a national sample, the findings will provide a greater understanding of settlement experiences and how these events culturally and socially shape youth's daily lives. Specifically, the study consisted of the following questions: 1) What challenges and barriers do newcomer youth personally face or have faced?; 2) From their perspective, what challenges and barriers do their families face or have faced?; 3) What coping strategies do they use to deal with these challenges?; and 4) What advice would they give to in-coming or recently arrived newcomer youth?

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

A total of 125 newcomer youth (60 girls, 65 boys) from five provinces of Canada participated in the study. The provinces included: Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Québec. For youth to participate, they had to meet several criteria: 1) the length of residency in Canada was 5 years or less; 2) youth had permanent immigrant status (e.g., refugee and immigrants, legally residing in Canada); and 3) were between the ages of 11 to 20 years of age (middle to high school students). The mean age of the youth was 15.67 years ($SD = 1.79$). As seen in Table 1, the number of participants from each province varied. For each province, an

immigrant serving agency or community organization was responsible for recruiting the youth. The youth were recruited from the organization's youth programs, by immigrant serving agency staff who recruited in schools, and word of mouth. Youth emigrated from 30 countries (see Table 2). Each youth was paid $25 for their participation and dinner/lunch was provided.

Procedures and Measures

The project consisted of two parts: 1) completing a Background Questionnaire and a written component of listing one's top three settlement challenges; and 2) participating in a focus group. When the youth agreed to participate in the study (and parental consent was obtained for youth 17 years of age and younger), they were asked to complete a Personal Questionnaire which included questions on date of birth, date of arrival in Canada, ethnicity, parents' birth places, current grade level, and email addresses if they wanted a copy of this report. To ensure that this study was tapping into the youth's personal challenges and issues of adjustment and settlement into Canada, they were also asked to list their personal top three challenges. Youth who had difficulties filling out the Questionnaire (English version only) had assistance from the organization or a friend/peer.

The youth also participated in a one-time focus group (up to 13 in each group) which was conducted separately for boys and girls as we had anticipated that some challenges may be gender-sensitive (e.g., social relationships) or comfort levels of engaging in activities with the opposite sex may exclude some individuals from participating in this study (e.g., religious customs). Two provinces (British Columbia and Ontario) had more than two focus groups. Each focus group was about one to two and a half hours in length, and was tape-recorded and later transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy of the statements. All of the youth, except one youth male (a peer interpreter), were able to speak English (the one youth made one statement).

Notetakers were also used to double-check the accuracy of the transcriptions. The primary researcher conducted most of the focus groups, expect for Québec which was conducted in Spanish[a] (as the organization's outreach of youth were Latinos), and a second set of focus groups in British Columbia. The focus group leader in Québec was trained by the primary researcher over the phone. Also, because of the low attendance in the first focus group meetings in British Columbia due to weather and sickness, two additional focus groups were conducted by a trained focus group leader who was a notetaker for the first two focus groups. For Ontario, a second focus group for boys was conducted due to the limited ethnic representation in the first group.

The focus groups were structured similarly across the provinces (except Québec[b]) where the youth talked about their settlement experiences. Four primary questions were posed: 1) what challenges and barriers did the newcomer youth personally face as they adjusted and settled into Canada; 2) from their perspectives, what challenges did their families face; 3) what coping strategies did they use to deal with these challenges; and 4) what advice would they give to recently arrived or in-coming newcomer youth. Subsequent questions were probing questions which were used to encourage more responses but not to lead the discussion (e.g., "Anything else?"). The topic and the order of the topic of discussions were based on the youth's individual written responses from their Personal Questionnaire which were disclosed at the beginning of the focus group. The number of youth who spoke in the focus groups for each question varied as responding to the questions was voluntary and youth had the option of not answering without any negative consequences (see Table 1).

Coding of Newcomer Youth's Major Settlement Challenges

All individuals who migrated to a new country face multiple challenges and barriers as

they adjusted and settled into the "Canadian way of life." However, the degree to which these challenges negatively shaped one's settlement process differed for each individual. From both the Personal Questionnaires and focus groups, youth revealed a multitude of challenges. The discussion of these challenges will be presented in two sections: 1) Personal Questionnaires; and 2) Focus Group discussions, with a particular focus on the latter.

Coding of Newcomer Youth's Written and Verbal Responses

Personal Questionnaires

Before youth openly discussed their adjustment and settlement challenges, it was imperative to tap into their personal viewpoints. From their written statements on their top three immigration challenges, the youth identified 18 topical issues. Some issues had conceptual commonalities and thus were further collapsed into broader themes, resulting in 11 themes. To provide a brief overview of the initial responses of newcomer youth's challenges, the themes included, in order of significance: 1) language barriers and acquisition (93 youth); 2) peer relations (i.e., making friends, difficulties of making friends due to a language barrier) (57 youth); 3) school issues (school system and grades, academic performance, and culture) (42 youth); 4) Canadian environment (weather, location of places) (42 youth); 5) Canadian culture (norms and customs, Canadian food) (36 youth); 6) financial issues (23 youth); 7) negative behaviours (anti-social behaviours, discrimination and racism) (9 youth); 8) parent-child relations (4 youth); 9) missing native country (4 youth); 10) balancing dual cultures (3 youth); and 11) preferring native culture (1 youth) (see Table 3 for coding system and definitions; see Table 4 for detailed frequencies of challenges by province by gender).

As the number of participants in each focus group varied across the provinces (see Table 1), calculations for the percentage of endorsement for a particular challenge were conducted to

standardize the varied sample sizes (see Table 5). For example, 92% of the Alberta boys (12 out of 13 boys) wrote that they were experiencing general problems with language (e.g., unable to speak and write English and/or French).

Focus Groups

Using the youth's written comments about their personal challenges as the platform for focus group discussions, youth elaborated on their challenges as well as mentioning additional challenges. A total of 24 issues were discussed, which were then collapsed into 12 themes. The 12 themes included, in order of significance: 1) language barriers and acquisition (75 youth); 2) negative behaviours (64 youth); 3) peer relations (55 youth); 4) school issues (51 youth); 5) Canadian culture (39 youth); 6) Canadian environment (39 youth); 7) preferring native country (26 youth); 8) missing native country (23 youth); 9) financial issues (19 youth); 10) parent-child relations (18 youth); 11) dual culture (15 youth); and 12) language silo (12 youth). See Table 3 for coding systems and definitions and Table 6 for detailed frequencies of challenges by province and by gender.

Similar to the Personal Questionnaires, Table 7 shows the youth's levels of response for various challenges based on percentage of endorsement. For example, 86% (12 of the 14) BC girls responded that they faced language challenges such as difficulties in speaking English and/or French.

Personal Questionnaires and Focus Groups

To provide an overview of the levels of responses to newcomers' challenges, the number of endorsements based on their written (personal questionnaires) and verbal (focus groups) responses are presented in Tables 8 (Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario) and 9 (Québec, Nova Scotia, overall total).

Coding of Perceptions of Families' Settlement Challenges

As seen in Table 10, the majority of youth who talked about their families' acculturation challenges focused on four areas: 1) financial issues (including employment, credentialing parents' education and skills obtained in their native country) (26 youth); 2) language barriers and acquisition (3 youth); 3) racism and discrimination (3 youth); and 4) parent-child separation (2 youth) (see Table 3 for coding definitions). Table 11 shows the percentage of youth who mentioned each issue. For example, of the five Nova Scotia boys who talked about their families' challenges, four (80%) mentioned financial issues.

Coding for Newcomer Youth's Coping Strategies

To gain a greater understanding of how newcomer youth were adjusting and settling in their communities, they were also asked to discuss how they dealt with these challenges. Numerous coping strategies were discussed by 80 youth which were based on individual and social/community factors. A total of 11 coping strategies emerged. At the individual level, seven themes were mentioned: 1) books, TV, and media; 2) general personal characteristics (e.g., working hard) (22 youth); 3) practicing their skills (e.g., doing their homework) (22 youth); 4) relying on one's culture (11 youth); 5) choosing friends (8 youth); 6) ignoring negative behaviours (7 youth); and 7) being realistic/patient (3 youth). At the social/community level, four themes emerged, including: 1) teachers and schools (27 youth); 2) friends/peer support (21 youth); 3) community resources (9 youth); and 4) family support (1 youth) (see Table 12 for coding system and definitions and Table 13 for frequencies). For this question, the level of endorsement was lower as compared to their discussions on adjustment and settlement challenges as youth. The percentage of responses for each coping strategy is shown in Table 14.

Coding for Newcomer Youth's Advice to New Immigrants

Lastly, youth were asked to provide advice to potential incoming immigrant and refugee youth. As seen in Table 15, 11 advice categories emerged. Fifty-nine youth participated in this discussion. The advice varied from focusing on personal characteristics and efforts to the reliance on other individuals and community organizations. Specifically, the categories included: 1) general personal characteristics (32 youth); 2) reliance on one's native cultural beliefs and values (10 youth); 3) friends/peer support (9 youth); 4) strategies for choosing the "right" friends (9 youth); 5) support of teachers and/or schools (8 youth); 6) using community resources (7 youth); 7) engaging in extracurricular activities (6 youth); 8) books/media/TV (6 youth); 9) ignoring negativity (6 youth); 10) practicing one's skills (4 youth); and 11) being realistic/patient (3 youth). Table 16 shows the level of endorsement by youth based on the number of participants who actively engaged in responding to this particular question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Newcomer youth's responses from the Personal Questionnaire provided insight into their adjustment and settlement experiences. However, it was through the focus group methodology that participants were able to delve more in-depth about their settlement experiences. Thus, and for the sake of brevity, the results will be based on the focus group responses, in order of importance (highest number of responses). Due to the complexities of this study as discussed in the Methodology, the results will not be analyzed by province or by gender. However, these details are provided in the Tables.

Newcomer Youth's Settlement Challenges

Youth were first asked about their challenges and issues that they had or were facing as they negotiated through their new lives in Canada. Youth identified 12 broad challenges. The

order of discussion of the challenges was determined by the highest level of responses for each challenge, with particular focus on the top six challenges (capturing at least one third of the responses) (see Table 6).

Challenge 1: Language Barriers and Acquisition

As many immigrants come from countries where neither one of Canada's official languages are widely spoken or learned prior to migration, it was expected that many would struggle with the official language, primarily English and both English and French in Québec. Language permeates throughout various aspects of one's life, and thus, language challenges are multi-faceted in nature and difficult to parse out from other aspects (e.g., making friends, doing well in school). However, we were able to disentangle, to some extent, the various types of language challenges, focusing on the underlying crux of the challenge at hand.

The most significant challenge that the majority of youth mentioned was the general issues of learning a new language. Specifically, youth faced difficulties with the acquisition of the language such as reading, writing (e.g., sentence structure, grammar, spelling), and speaking the new language (e.g., having limited vocabulary to express one's ideas, opinions, or asking questions) (75 youth, 74% of respondents). Within this category, many youth raised issues of the general barrier of being unable to communicate with others as they were unfamiliar with speaking English/French. For example, a 17-year-old Algerian boy stated,

> Two years ago, I kept talking to my guidance [counsellor] and I don't understand. She kept telling me, asking me questions, and I kept saying 'Yes, yes, yes'. After one year, I wanted to go to university but I took all my courses applied. I told her, 'Why did you give me applied?' She told me that 'You told me that. I asked you.' So I had to change all over.

The myriad of language difficulties also included the logistics of learning grammar and writing.

Thus, the basic components of learning a new language were typically found among these

newcomers.

However, there were significant numbers of individuals who spoke English as a (or one

of) native dialect. However, their general language problems were based on *how* they spoke

English, their accent, resulting in similar challenges in communicating with others. As various

English speaking countries have their own unique intonations and stress marks on words, some

youth complained that peers and teachers were not able to understand their accent. As a 16-year-

old Kenyan BC girl expressed,

> My problem wasn't really language but my accent…I never knew I had an accent
>
> until I came here and the way I pronounce words is closer to…a mixture of
>
> Jamaican and British accent...Apparently people couldn't understand what I was
>
> saying.

Challenge 2: Negative Behaviours

The second greatest challenge that youth described focused on the various types of social

interactions that they had personally experienced. Over half of the youth talked about being

exposed to negative behaviours (64 youth, 57%). There was a range of negative behaviours

which we divided into two types of themes: 1) anti-social behaviours/deviancy; and 2)

discrimination and racism.

Anti-social behaviours/deviancy. For incidences of anti-social behaviours and deviancy,

most offences were described as primarily being perpetrated by their peers. Of the responses (32

youth; 29%), youth mentioned peer pressure, various forms of physical and psychological (i.e.,

social exclusion, teasing) aggression, as well as bullying tactics (a more serious form of

aggression where individuals were targeted rather than being randomly victimized). Also, some youth interpreted the aggressors' motives as being specifically targeted to newcomers rather than to youth in general. As one 18-year-old Chinese Ontario girl stated, "You have no friends…There are a lot of people who are trying to bully you cuz you don't speak English and you don't have any friends. You're lonely."

Other delinquent behaviours focused on gang-related activities, drugs, and alcohol. Some youth talked about how they were offered cigarettes and alcohol which were new personal experiences for them. Specifically, a 16-year-old El Salvadorian BC boy said,

> I have been with people who tell me, 'Here a cigarette', or 'Here drink this,'
> right? So I have to be like, 'No, thank you.'…Because like if I go and I start to do
> this stuff I would be gone, right?…In my country - never seen that before.

Discrimination and racism. Another form of negative behaviour focused on discriminatory and racist remarks and behaviours but unlike anti-social behaviours, these actions was perpetrated by not only their similar-aged cohort but by teachers, the school administration, and the community at large (32 youth, 29%).

At the peer level, 16 youth provided examples of how their peers (in school and in the community) made racist and discriminatory remarks toward them or their ethnic heritage. Some examples focused on perceived stereotypes of certain cultures. As one 16-year-old Colombian Quebec boy illustrated, which, unfortunately was not a unique experience,

> When you arrive here and you mention that you are from Colombia, they say, 'Oh
> you must be 'encaletado' [someone carrying a large supply of drugs]. You must
> have cocaine and who knows what else.' Yeah. That has happened _many_ times to
> me.

Other comments from peers were based on a strong sentiment where the intent was to derogate the victim(s) and to express the exclusionary belief that Canada should be home to only non-immigrants or certain groups of people. For example, in an everyday activity of walking in the neighbourhood, a 20-year-old Ethiopian Nova Scotia boy recounted,

> We were walking home cause there is no bus service...It was like after twelve,
>
> right? And we are walking and this girl, she walks by, looked at us, and then we
>
> are like, 'Ok, just keep walking' and then she was like, 'You niggers' like 'go
>
> back to Africa you ugly niggers.' Straight up!

Within the school setting, several youth across the nation were distressed by the level of discrimination and racism expressed by their teachers, school administrators, and the school system, more generally. Thirteen youth spoke about this issue (11%) which was difficult to openly discuss such negative situations as most of the youth consistently emphasized throughout the focus groups the importance of students respecting their teachers. One 18-year-old Nigerian Ontario girl recalled,

> I went to my science class…and my teacher was like, 'Oh, tell me the story about
>
> Africa' and whatever. So I was telling her about the story and everything and
>
> suddenly she was like, 'Oh, do African people sleep in trees?'…[crying] It makes
>
> me so sad because you don't just judge people just because you're black and
>
> whatever she's used to…Like and I told her that we have houses. Most people ask
>
> me the questions like, 'Where do you live?' instead of just, 'Do African people
>
> sleep in trees?'…Why would you even say that? You are my teacher.

Other students experienced significant struggles of discrimination that had potentially serious long-term effects on their future academic success. Many immigrant youth have academic plans

to enter university and not community college and so the type of classes they complete in high school are important. For example, an 18-year-old Pakistani Ontario girl stated,

Sometimes your counselor don't give you the right piece of advice. She told me that it's good to go to college first and then university. And she said that you should have college courses first and then get university courses. But I asked her to give me university courses. She give me university-level chemistry and academic English. But, she gave me maths [applied math for college]…That was not fair and in the end, after getting 100% in my maths, she's not changing my subjects. She's not giving me university courses.

Even when youth attempted to explain their particular background, some teachers became rigid in their attitudes and beliefs about immigrants and typologized them into one stereotypic group. As one frustrated youth (17-year-old Ontario girl from India) expressed,

When I came to Canada, I gave my schedule to my science teacher and he was like, 'How come you don't have ESL?' I told him that I studied English in my country and he was like, "No, no you can't study English here. Go back to ESL, the first level, and then come back to academic English.'…He just kept telling me for a week to go and I went to a counselor because I didn't know what ESL was at that time, and the counselor was like, 'Well, you [took] an exam and you got almost perfect so I don't think you should go.

Other ways that youth viewed their teachers as displaying discriminatory behaviours were through actions of favouritism for certain ethnic groups. As commented by a 19-year old Chinese BC girl, "Even the teachers. [my teacher's] white and the white people come late, he doesn't say anything. But, if black people or Chinese people late, he always yell at them."

Such discriminatory/racist remarks and attitudes of school personnel are evidence of ignorance and/or blatant ways that some individuals embarrass newcomer youth. These types of remarks, exacerbated by a power differential between teacher/administrator and student, increase the seriousness of these racial incidences. Also, teachers are the role models for students and so when teachers express these value-laden attitudes toward certain groups, it creates an unproductive, unreceptive (or "unwelcoming") learning environment for newcomer students. Teachers and school personnel are a part of the formal institution that has the responsibility and the obligation to ensure the well-adjustment and well-being of all students, regardless of nationality and immigration status.

Lastly, some youth faced some form of discrimination and/or racism from their neighbouhood and community. As newcomer youth engaged in everyday, mundane activities, they were exposed to negative behaviours from various individualsin unexpected places. To illustrate, a 15-year-old Afghani Alberta boy was on his way to our focus group. As he was traveling in a taxi with other participants, the taxi driver asked him, "You from Afghanistan? You guys are Taliban." Unfortunately, this comment was extremely upsetting to not only the Afghani boy but to the passengers as well. It is unfortunate that many newcomer youth have to deal with such remarks from strangers as the went about their everyday activities.

Challenge 3: Peer Relations

Similar to any new social environment, newcomer youth face challenges in rebuilding their social networks and relationships. Thus, peer relations were one of the top challenges that they faced. Almost half of the youth (55 youth, 49%) were willing to talk about these issues. Responses on peer relations were divided into two subcategories: 1) language barriers in creating social relations; and 2) building relationships.

Language barriers in creating social relationships. Newcomers who are unable to speak the host language experienced difficulties and challenges of communicating with their peers, teachers, school personnel, and the community at large. Across the five provinces, 27 youth (24%) spoke about the various struggles that their communication barriers had created for them. First, youth expressed the frustration of wanting to talk with others to make friends and to fit in with their peers but were hindered by language. As one BC 15 year-old boy from Thailand stated,

> Sometime I wanna say something but I don't know the English and stuff. So I just
>
> keep it to myself. I just don't know like all those slangs they use and it was just
>
> hard to, you know, make friends and without knowing all that.

Second, some youth described situations where their peers took advantage of the fact that they had no or limited understanding of the English language. For example, one 11-year-old Colombian Quebec girl said,

> I was one of two Colombians in my class and I would ask the other Colombian
>
> guy to translate what I wanted to say, but instead of translating what I told him, he
>
> would change it around. For instance, I wanted to ask a girl if she wanted to be
>
> my friend, but then he told her something, and I didn't know what it mean and
>
> then she gave me a bad look and went away. And I was like, 'What did I do?' and
>
> then after a while, when I started to learn the language better, I realized that he
>
> was not telling people what I wanted him to.

Building relationships. As youth enter a new country, they need to re-establish a social network of friendships and relationships. Especially in school settings where youth spend a significant amount of their time together, peer relations becomes an important part of their lives.

These types of relationship challenges were discussed by 40 youth (36%). First, some youth recounted the early days of their settlement experiences where they came to Canada with no friends. Unfortunately, some youth struggled for longer periods of time. One South Korean BC girl (age was undisclosed) recalled those early migration experiences,

> When I first came here I didn't have any friends. So, I ate my lunch alone but I had nowhere to [sit]. If sit at the cafeteria alone, it was kind of embarrassing. So, I started to walk around the courtyard. But then when the rainy day, I couldn't walk around because it's raining so hard in Vancouver.

> For newcomers, being the "new kid" was a difficult part of their new lives. As described by one youth (18-year-old Chinese Ontario girl), "Because they're already a group. They know each other so they don't really want you to become a new member in that group." Thus, some youth found it very difficult to break into the existing establishment of groups. Others focused on the hardship of taking the initiative of introducing themselves to strangers.

> When you want to make friends is just like really hard. You can't just go up to someone and say, 'Hey, how are you?' Right? Is just like really difficult for you because you are new. First you don't know the language. You have the language barrier and second is too awkward. You can't just go to a random person and just say 'hi' (16-year-old Indian Alberta boy).

> Unfortunately, such personal difficulties of creating new social networks and relationships led to negative psychological outcomes for newcomers such as stress, anxiety, and loneliness.

> Especially if you are new in the place and the school. In here it's very difficult. You actually feel bad everyday because mostly it's like a new school and in

school you always need a friend or need people to hang out with (17-year-old

Congolese Nova Scotia girl).

Challenge 4: School Challenges

As youth spent a significant portion of their time in school and school systems differ across the world, it was expected that newcomers would experience some level of school adjustment problems. Of the 125 youth, 51 (46%) actively engaged in these school-related discussions. These school challenges were divided into four categories: 1) grading and school system; 2) academic performance; 3) peer exclusion; and 4) cultural practices and norms.

Grading and school system. Many youth spoke to the challenges they faced in dealing with the grading procedures and curriculum as well as how schools function (i.e., rules and regulation) (38 youth, 34%). Most immigrants had previous school experience and expertise from their homeland but unfortunately, many aspects of their previous knowledge were neither transferrable nor relevant to the Canadian system. As illustrated by a 17-year-old Indian ON girl,

Sometimes the teachers make you hate the course…So what happened was we did

this question…I did it my own way. The way that I learned in India and my

teacher she gave me 2/15 saying that, she wrote…'I didn't teach it. This is a

university level. You're not supposed to do this in grade 12.' She wrote it on my

test and I showed it to my counselor and my counselor was like, 'Well, just keep

it because if you complain then you're going to get in trouble.'

In this situation, as mentioned by other youth as well, some youth sought help from other school officials like a counselor, only to be given no support for their cause.

Academic performance. For issues surrounding academic performance, some youth (15 youth, 13%) discussed their grades and performance. Many youth worried about their

educational trajectories as they faced some difficulties in achieving high grades.

Peer exclusion. Peer exclusion, as it related to schooling, was problematic for many immigrants. In the Canadian system, many teachers assigned group projects for grades which potentially encouraged students to exclude newcomers, especially if they were not proficient (or perceived as not proficient) in English/French. For example,

> Sometimes in class, like if you are doing a project or something, you need a
>
> partner. But like all of the other students they'll be running away from you, like
>
> they don't want to work with you…They're like, 'My friend is coming. We are
>
> full.' (Nova Scotia 17-year-old Congolese girl)

This type of situation was not uncommon. Some students explained that in their country, group projects were never a part of their learning experience or curricula. Subsequently, these students lacked the knowledge and skill sets needed to work effectively in group projects. Such situations created an environment where the individual may likely fail or be less successful. Thus, even a highly motivated student would not have the human capital (i.e., peronal knowledge, experience) needed to contribute equally to the team. Also, as many newcomers have (or are perceived to have) limited English, their peers may socially exclude them from their group. Unfortunately, their peers may have viewed newcomers as a deficit to their team rather than of value, someone with skills, talents, and expertise *but* in another language.

School culture. Unlike other aspects of schooling, the schools' cultural practices and norms were not explicitly stated or publicized but rather, were assumed to be *known* – a part of the hidden curriculum. This level of social capital of knowledge is difficult for newcomers to grasp and/or attain as their previous experiences and knowledge from their homeland may not be transferrable or relevant. Interestingly, eight youth (7%) spoke about the school culture with a

particular focus on classroom behaviours which encompassed the notions of respect. First, most

of these youth were disturbed by the lack of respect that students held for teachers. As one 18-

year-old Congolese Nova Scotia girl explained,

> The challenge is how kids act in class. They don't have respect for their teacher
>
> and stuff. They do whatever they want. If the teacher says something, they slam
>
> the door in front of the teacher. It's not good.

Another form of respect that youth mentioned was the non-verbal communication of

respect for teachers. Specifically, how students' averted their eyes toward (or away from) their

teachers (or older adults) to show reverence differed by country. In some countries, avoiding eye

contact, with the younger person gazing downward, was deemed as a sign of respect whereas in

other countries such as Canada, the lack of eye contact was interpreted as a sign of irreverence.

Over time, newcomers learned, through observing or personal experience, that teachers in

Canada expected students to make eye contact when they were being spoken to. As one 18-year-

old BC girl from Myanmar described,

> I told you my teacher right, I have to look eye-to-eyes…No, I couldn't look eye-
>
> to-eye…When she's talking to me, I couldn't look at her eyes. If I look in her
>
> eyes, it's like, I was rude to her, right? So when I came here, they say, 'Why are
>
> you not looking in my eyes?'…So I have to adapt to a new culture. It was really
>
> hard. I tried to focus when I talk to my teacher. I look at her.

Challenge 5: Canadian Environment

Many youth (39 youth, 35%) spent a significant amount of time talking about the

difficulties of the living conditions in Canada in relation to the weather and the physical

surroundings such as the location of stores, neighborhoods and places etc.. Many of the

youth originated from warmer parts of the world (e.g., Africa, Latin America) where the weather was mild or tropical. Thus, the winter weather of snow, ice, and rain posed as daily challenges for many youth, especially as they needed to walk to school or to places. One Ontario girl from India, 17 years of age, described,

> At first I was really excited to see snow because I had never really seen snow before…It was pretty cool…And then it just got annoying after…Got tired of it…In my old school, it's if even you have like an inch of snow, school is closed. And it's like here, the snow could be to your knees and you still have to go to school.

> Others talked about the difficulties of deciding on how many layers of clothing to wear as the indoors were fairly warm. However, others implied a financial component to this problem to the extent that they did not have "enough jackets of stuff" (15-year-old Iranian BC boy). For these comments, it was not clear as to whether some youth could not afford to buy warmer clothing or that they were ill-prepared for the cold.

> Two youth mentioned the geographical challenge of getting to places (2%). These challenges focused on the distance between locations and the difficulties of getting from one place to another. Such distances can be exacerbated by the difficulties of understanding the transit system. As one 15-year-old Afghani Ontario boy explained,

> For me, first time when I use TTC, I had a doctor appointment. They told me the way how to come to the place, but they didn't tell me the way to come back home. So, I just moving around on Toronto more than six hour. And then I got home.

Challenge 6: Canadian Culture

For 38 youth (35%), the cultural navigation of learning about the Canadian way of life was a demanding and stressful process. These learning experiences were coded into two inter-related components: 1) customs, norms, and beliefs; and 2) Canadian food.

Customs, norms, and beliefs. In any given family, community, and more broadly, country, there are cultural customs, norms, and beliefs that guide one's behaviours, social interactions, and views on life. As youth adjusted and settled into Canada, they quickly became cognizant of "how things were done". Some alluded to the cultural practices in general, stating that there were many traditions and standards that were different as compared to those of their native culture. Thus, they found it difficult to adjust. Some stereotypic views of "Canadians" also made their way to the immigrants' experiences, as one 17-year-old Chinese Ontario girl declared,

> Cuz hockey is Canada's favourite sport. But in China, people doesn't really play
>
> hockey. So when someone asks me, 'Do you like hockey?' I say, 'No' so they
>
> stare at me like I'm weird.

Outward appearances of how youth dressed were also acknowledged as creating challenges for some to fit in with the mainstream population and also had some psychological implications. For example, a 17-year-old Congolese Nova Scotia girl said,

> Everybody wears pants and, jeans. So you cannot keep wearing dresses if you are
>
> feeling cold here. Everybody wears jeans and pants. So, it's Canadians way…
>
> You have to follow the way people dress sometimes to make yourself feel good.

Canadian food. Everyday sustenance for some can be a constant struggle as local grocery stores may not carry certain types of ethnic foods. Especially for families who held religious

customs and beliefs that affected their dietary needs, this daily challenge was taxing on children, youth, and their families. As one Afghani Ontario boy, 13 years of age, raised, "We cannot eat any foods because we are Muslim, so we have to eat halal food. So it's hard for us to find the halal food. We couldn't eat any food." Also, the manner in which some foods were prepared (e.g., fast food) may not have been customary in some cultures and thus, youth needed to adjust and accommodate to these food dilemmas or become more familiar with Canadian food. For example, junk food was a novelty for some immigrants.

Other Challenges

There is a tendency of researchers and service providers to focus on the youth's current experiences and challenges, with past experiences in their native homeland placed on the periphery of examination. However, as several youth stated, some of their difficulties of adjusting and settling into Canada were a result of youth viewing certain aspects of their country, cultural customs and norms, as better than Canada (26 youth, 23%). First, 18 youth made general statements that they preferred their country than Canada which made the transition to Canada more difficult. Some focused on cultural values such as respecting adults, as illustrated by a 19-year-old Liberian Nova Scotia boy,

> In the bus, we see older person in the bus. In my country, you have to give them
>
> full respect for them to sit. But, in this country when I came, and I tried to do that
>
> in the bus. People started laughing. So that's kind of most strange and different
>
> because their culture is not. I still do it…I still give them the respect.

Comparing native and host countries, some youth placed emphasis on the foundations of relationships (14 youth, 13%). Of particular interest was how youth described their levels of closeness and intimacy with their parents as compared to their peers' relationships with their

parents. Some immigrants believed that their relationships with parents, families, and the

community in general were more valued by them than their native counterparts. An 11-year-old

Colombian Quebec girl talked about her relationship with her mom in comparison to her peers',

stating,

> I see that the relationship between parents and daughters is very dry, while I am
>
> always happy with my mom. I get happy when I get to see her. Here instead they
>
> say, 'Oh, I don't want to go home and be with my parents,' and they would like,
>
> "I am going to tell my mom that I am going to go to my byfriend's house or my
>
> friend's house" and then they decide to stay there for like 2 or 3 days and then
>
> come back home.

Another girl (Quebec, Colombian, 17 years of age) said,

> Every time I see my mom I kiss her in the cheek, and the same with my dad…For
>
> instance, here young people don't want their parents to touch them or anything.
>
> The Québecois say to their parents, "Don't touch me. Don't do this. Don't do
>
> that." Instead, I always kiss my dad in the cheek and the same with my mom
>
> every time I see them.

These different cultural and family values that newcomers held posed as challenges as they tried

to culturally adjust to their new social environments.

Other challenges that youth faced were the difficulties of missing their home country as

they left behind their social network of family and friends, and their way of life (23 youth, 21%).

For all newcomers, the disruption of one's lifestyle, everyday routines, the familiarity of one's

cultural customs and practices, and the transitioning and adjusting to a "new world" can have

significant implications to one's psychological well-being and sense of belongingness in the host

country.

> You get along with your friends…I mean like you've grown up in your country
>
> and you know everyone and you have your family and friends from childhood.
>
> And then you come here. You have no one…You want to go back, but then you
>
> think, 'Why did I came here?' It's because, in my case, it's because my country is
>
> like so violent. It's really bad. I really miss my country…I want to stay here
>
> because I think of my future, but then, oh my god. It's hard. I really miss my
>
> family (14-year-old El Salvadorian Ontario girl).

In describing his initial feelings during the immigration process, the 15-year-old Colombian Quebec boy stated that he felt "like a piece of grass in a big field."

As new families migrate to Canada, many families faced financial hardships which intensified their immigration challenges (19 youth, 17%). Although some youth acknowledged that they received financial support from the government, the family still struggled to meet their basic needs.

> For us, we are six in the family, and the government assistance is not enough.
>
> Because we have to go to food bank every month and trying to get any help of
>
> any kind that we can to get day by day. So it's not enough (18-year-old El
>
> Salvadorian Ontario boy).

There were 18 youth (16%) who discussed the problems that they had with their parents. As some parents' level of English proficiency may be limited, parents then relied on their adolescent children to be their language broker (interpreter). Unfortunately for some youth, this level of responsibility had interfered with their own personal responsibilities and placed them in difficult situations where balancing their family and school/work life may be complicated at

times. For example, one 13-year-old Afghani Ontario boy stated,

> For our family, it's hard to speak English. They're older, so it's hard for them to
> speak. So we have to be there for them. Sometimes we have to leave our school
> for them. Or anything else, we have to leave our stuff, our work, and come, for
> them. And explain for them, because they don't know English. So if they have
> any translation, they wait for us.

Other parent-adolescent issues revolved around conflicts where differences of opinions were expressed such as type of clothing the adolescent should wear, what profession they should pursue (e.g., medicine versus a musician). One youth focused on the lack of human and social capital that their parents had and how it had hindered his abilities to navigate through the academic system.

Another challenge that 18 youth (16%) experienced was balancing both cultures, but not in a negative way. At the individual level, five youth personally struggled with how they lived their daily lives. For example, they wanted to engage in social activities with their friends and with their families but the activities were at the same time (e.g., wanted to hang out with friends on a Friday night but the family attended religious service).

In other circumstances, the struggles of the two cultures may be family-based. Some youth faced the pressures from their families to maintain and retain their native culture, especially the native language. Unfortunately, some youth had admittedly acknowledged that they were losing their native language. Native language loss had significant ramifications to their social relationships (especially with their parents if the parents' English/French proficiency was limited), their ethnic identity, and changed the dynamics of the family. One 15-year-old Thai BC boy acknowledged this problem with his parents,

The main problem for me is that like my parents want me to speak, Thai at home, because they don't want me to forget the language and stuff. But then with the majority of my days being spent with like speaking English and just going out with English people and just being in that culture…When I speak with my parents, like in one sentence I use half Thai and half English, and then they would not understand something…I realize I am actually starting to forget some of the things…That's the barrier…When they say something in Thai, like I am not going to understand it fully, cause like, my education at that language stopped at a certain level…That's what's kind of a problem between me and my parents. Not being able to communicate fully with each other, and not being able to understand each other well because of the language.

Lastly, 12 youth (11%) talked about the difficulties of adjusting to the new language and the difficulties of making friends. Such circumstances have resulted in some youth creating a language silo for themselves where they sought out peers who spoke their native language. Although these peers served one goal, friendship, it amplified the language problem where the youth were not as advanced in their English/French language acquisition.

Perceptions of Families' Settlement Challenges

Youth were next asked to talk about the challenges and issues that their families faced in Canada. Of the 30 youth who provided comments, almost all of them focused on their parents' challenges and raised the issues of financial needs (26 youth, 87%). Many discussed the issues of credentialing where their parents were highly educated and had presitgious careers (e.g., medical doctor, professor) only to immigrate to Canada and be unemployed or hold low paying jobs.

Many of the youth were deeply disheartened by their parents' struggles and the financial stresses placed upon their families. As illustrated by one Ontario boy from India (age was undisclosed),

> My parents in India worked in university. Yeah, they applied for immigration to
>
> Canada and they told my parents that they will surely get a job in here…like in
>
> their background. That's what they told, the IC [meaning Citizenship and
>
> Immigration Canada] or something. And when they come here with expectations
>
> they're going to get a job, they don't really get the job like what they're expecting.
>
> You come here with hope that I'm really working harder and I'm going to get a
>
> better job here but they don't really get the job.

Another youth (18-year-old Pakistani BC girl) compared the educational levels of her native county and Canada, stating,

> The majority of people in Canada are immigrants, so the system here should be
>
> suitable more for immigrants than people who have lived there most of their lives,
>
> because my dad has done Ph.D. in his field, and he was here one and a half year
>
> he couldn't get a job. And honestly, in many countries the education is much
>
> harder and much better than here in Canada…When I came to Grade 8 I was
>
> shocked by everything in Grade 8 that was something I learned in Grade 3 or 4.

Although the complexities of credentialing and seeking employment opportunities in Canada were very difficult for youth to fully understand, the stresses of their parents were evident to youth. Some youth claimed that their families had no intentions of immigrating to Canada as they were content and financially stable in their home countries. However, according to the youth, officials of Canada enticed the parents to move the family to Canada for a "better life" and the "promises of employment" was given to them. Thus, youth witnessed their parents' trials

and tribulations of trying to survive in Canada. Some families, unfortunately, were separated where one parent had to return to their home country to provide financial support for their families in Canada.

Other family challenges that were perceived by youth included the general difficulties of learning a new language. Some youth stated that their parents had limited English abilities and so they also struggled with learning a new language (three youth, 10%). Three youth mentioned examples of how their families had faced discrimination and racism from the community. Lastly, two youth talked about the challenge of family separation where a parent or family members were not with them in Canada. Such geographical separation then created difficulties in maintaining relationships as well as the emotional toll it had on all of the family members (see Tables 10 and 11).

Newcomer Youth's Coping Strategies

As youth encountered various challenges and barriers as they adjusted to their new homeland, they developed numerous coping strategies to deal with the situations at hand. Almost two thirds of the youth offered their personal coping strategies which were based on both a personal/individual level and a social/community level. The discussion of responses for coping strategies will not be directly discussed in relation to specific challenges as the responses were not as forthcoming. So, for ease of presentation, the coping strategies will be discussed as a category, and linked to some challenges when the youth specifically linked it to a challenge.

Books, TV, and media. The most common coping strategy that youth mentioned across the five provinces was the use of books, TV, and media which primarily tackled the problem of language barriers and acquisition. One Ontario 18-year-old Chinese girl claimed, "Supposed you come across a few words you don't know in books, just go and look it up. That's how you can

get better at English." This individual level of coping, reliance on self and taking the initiative to learn the new language/accent, provided youth with another avenue, besides English classes at school, to better their circumstances.

Teachers and schools. The second most frequent strategy that newcomers mentioned was the reliance on teachers and school personnel (e.g., counselors) for assistance (27 youth, 34%). Although some youth did mention that some teachers were discriminatory and racist, many other teachers were viewed as helpful and willing to provide support for their students. One 13 year-old Ontario boy from Afghanistan said, "Ask from the teachers how you can be better or, learn better, or they're going to help you how to learn English faster. Ask from the teacher help." Others stated that teachers should be seen as protectors and will advocate on the students' behalf to deal with negative behaviours. For example, an Iranian Ontario 14-year-old boy expressed, "Stay out of trouble. If somebody else bullies you, just go to the teacher and don't fight him back."

Also, school activities were seen as beneficial for newcomers as these types of forums provided a common place for students to make friends. These forms of social level strategies were effective means of dealing with some of the youth's personal challenges.

Personal characteristics. Almost one third of the youth (24 youth) spoke about how they had to work hard on their personal characteristics of confidence, positivity, not being shy but more out-spoken (extraverted), being proud of themselves, and taking the initiative to deal with the problem (e.g., making friends). As one Congolese Nova Scotia 17-year-old girl stated,

> Say that you can do it. In your mind, you will say, 'Yes I can do it'. But if your
>
> strength can't do it, then you can't. So look for the way. Your strength can do it in
>
> yourself. Try to calm yourself. Try to believe and look for the way that another

person know that may make you to be strong and do what you want to do.

Focusing on the outcomes of the coping strategies such as making and maintaining friendship, one Indian Ontario girl (14 years of age) directly stated,

> You just talk to other people instead of just staying in your own little box and
>
> being shy and not saying anything. You just have to go out there and talk to
>
> people, and the you'll become friends. That's it.

Thus, many youth recognized that they had, to some extent, personal control over their settlement process. Through their own initiatives and the ways they interpreted their circumstances, they were able to deal with these barriers and challenges. However, the extent to which they were successful at overcoming these challenges is unclear.

Practicing skills. Similar to the coping strategies that enlisted their personal characteristics, some youth (22 youth, 28%) focused more on pragmatics of the challenge. Through hard work, practicing the necessary skills (e.g., talking to people to practice their conversational English), and learning new techniques, youth found that these forms of strategies benefited them over the year(s). "You just keep trying because you learn from your mistakes," as one 15 year-old Alberta boy from Pakistan said. As the old saying goes, "practice makes perfect."

Friends and peer support. Another strategy that some youth used was that they relied on their friends and peers for support (21 youth, 26%). As newcomers learned to navigate through the various aspects of their lives (e.g., school systems, neigborhoods), they had limited knowledge about "how things work." This social level strategy of relying on peers was a great source of social capital that assisted newcomers to the deal with their challenges. As one Korean BC boy (16 years of age) said, " My Canadian friend helped me really a lot. He almost took me

to his house like every day and every weekend for sleepovers, and stuff and we always hang out together…My English got really improved."

Rely on one's culture. Another strategy that some youth used to deal with their life challenges was that they relied on their cultural values and beliefs (11 youth, 14%). Some youth discussed how they valued their cultural heritage and wanted to educate their peers about their culture and country so that their peers could appreciate and understand diversity. As one Colombian Quebec boy (age undisclosed) declared,

> The solution against discrimination would be to be indifferent and on the
>
> contrary, show them our culture so they can have a better idea so the
>
> discrimination decreases, but without going so far into their culture because you
>
> can start losing yours. Share both.

Another Colombian Quebec boy (15 years of age) was active in engaging in "cultural education" with his peers, providing opportunities for his peers to experience "his world" through the medium of food. He stated that,

> One of the strategies that I used was that in the end, I was feeling so bad because I
>
> couldn't eat my food, and it was not just physical. It was also psychology because
>
> people looked at my badly because I was eating something different and because
>
> my food smelled different, and I was so tired that I started to give them some food
>
> to try. I would tell them to come and eat from my food, like "That's not poison.
>
> That's food. Eat it." Because I was so angry about the bad looks and all that that I
>
> made them eat it, and at the end, they said that they liked it. It's like trying to
>
> offer them the opportunity to know our culture. That's important.

Other ways that youth relied on their culture as a strategy were when they struggled to maintain their ethnic culture and language. Some youth talked about the importance of talking to their parents in their native tongue so that they could communicate with them. They also commented on the cultural activities that they engaged in to keep "in touch" with their heritage.

Community resources. Nine youth (11%) used community organizations (e.g., settlement agencies, family programs, school activities) to further their experiences and knowledge in the Canadian culture. First, some youth viewed these places as additional learning resources (beyond schools) which had books or classes that were informative. As one Chinese Alberta girl, 15 years of age, revealed,

> I went to this library…You read a book and then you just tell what the book was
>
> about to a librarian, and then they just give you present or money. So they just
>
> encourage me to read and study more. So it's kind of improved my English that
>
> year. So it was pretty good.

Another youth (Ontario 15-year-old girl from India) described the benefits of her involvement in a program, stating, "I joined the Youth Connections Program. The whole summer I was going there and now, all the people, I made friends there. And now…I do have friends at school, but those people, they're the best friends."

Other coping strategies. There were other coping strategies that were mentioned. Some stated that they were careful on who they chose as friends as they were aware of peer pressures and also wanted peers who were good role models for them (e.g., good students) (8 youth, 10%). Some talked about strategies that protected their psychological well-being by ignoring negative comments and behaviours from others (7 youth, 9%). Others mentioned that they tried to be patient with the adjustment process such as learning English or making friends. They stated that

they needed to be realistic about the challenges that they faced and acknowledged that some challenges were difficult to overcome but eventually, it would get better (3 youth, 4%). Lastly, one youth mentioned that he relied on his family for support (16 year-old BC boy from El Salvador).

Newcomer Youth's Advice for New Immigrants

The last question that the focus groups were asked was on their advice for newcomers. The advice that newcomers provided were similar to the coping strategies that they personally used. However, the order of significance differed. Less than half of the youth (59 youth) offered advice.

Personal characteristics. Personal characteristics were by far the most important advice that the youth raised (32 youth, 54%). One Indian Ontario girl (15 years of age) emphasized the importance of their cultural heritage,

> Be proud of what you are. Do not change yourself. Just be what you are, even if
> you are unique. You are different from people. Let them accept the way you are.
> Why do you want to change yourself? Just be yourself.

Another youth, Colombian Quebec boy, 15 years of age, imparted this advice,

> My advice is to open up so other people can get to know you. Slowly start to open
> up and open your heart because the Québecois have to know who you are…Find
> someone who is really fun, and feel that they won't reject you. Look for the
> people who are willing to accept you and that will help you open to the external
> world.

Rely on one's culture. Retaining one's cultural background and the family identity were viewed as an important piece of advice (10 youth, 17%). Although some had talked about the

difficulties of practicing their cultural customs and speaking their native language, they realized that maintaining their culture was equally as important as learning the Canadian culture. "You can still be Canadian. Like people aren't saying that, "Oh you can't be Canadian.'…Don't try to erase your own culture completely and focus on Canadian. Like put the two together" (15-year-old Ontario girl from India).

Other advice. Less than 10 youth mentioned other advice (across the five provinces). As seen in Tables 15 and 16, the advice that was mentioned were similar to coping strategies. Specifically, some youth stressed the importance of support from friends, peers, teachers, school, and the community at large. For example, one 17 year-old Alberta boy from India (52 years of age) stated,

> I would tell them to go volunteer after school, or in the school cause like with
>
> volunteer you learn so many stuff you never learned about. Like I volunteered
>
> first at the library for the computer buddy. I never learned how to use a computer
>
> but when I was in the volunteering, I learned how to use the computer. I learned
>
> how to use Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint and stuff.

Similarly, a Colombian 15 year-old Quebec boy advised,

> Go to the information centres like this one and ask where the parks are, what
>
> activities there are to do. Because that helps to release the stress from the
>
> Frenchising [learning French] because that is very stressful. That helps you relax.
>
> Like you can breath, going out and not staying home watching the TV.

As illustrated in their coping strategies, these were effective avenues to deal with the challenges and barriers that they faced in their daily lives. Other advice focused on personal initiatives such as self-learning (from books, TV, and media), practicing their skills/techniques,

engaging in activities, and ignoring negative behaviours. As one 12-year-old Ontario girl poignantly advised, "Do not get discouraged by others."

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study was uniquely designed to not only focus on the challenges and barriers of newcomer youth but also on the coping strategies that were used to deal with the varying issues. Newcomer Youth's perspectives of their families' immigration challenges and advice that they would offer to incoming youth were also explored. The findings were primarily based on focus group meetings.

First, the sample size was relatively small and not necessarily representative of newcomer youth in Canada. Although youth originated from 30 countries, the sample was not large enough to explore possible unique challenges based on religion, sub-enthicity, culture, gender, etc. Also, other influencing factors such as household income, parents' level of education and level of host language abilities, physical location of living in the city or rural areas, can also be predictive of the types of challenges that youth may experience. Such factors need to be further examined. However, few studies have focused on immigrant and refugee youth's perspectives on their settlement process and so this discussion paper provides the groundwork for future research.

As discussed earlier, the focus groups were not conducted similarly across provinces as the researcher was unable to speak Spanish (for the focus groups in Quebec). The training was conducted over the phone and so discrepancies occurred. Also, focus groups in British Columbia differed as a second facilitator conducted some focus groups. So, the findings should be taken with caution. These discrepancies precluded any direct comparisons between and among provinces but, the youth's responses are still relevant and consistent with responses in other provinces.

Lastly, there are limitations with the use of focus groups. Focus groups allowed individuals to potentially talk about issues in a more open manner as one-on-one interviews may be preceived as intimidating. There can be a level of comfort of speaking one's mind when others also experience similar challenges. However, some youth in this study did not speak during the focus groups, which was their right to do as their participation was voluntary. One explanation for the non-active participants may be that the focus groups were primarily conducted in English and some participants may not have felt comfortable with speaking in English in front of strangers and/or had limited abilities to express their opinions and views. The youth were told ahead of time that the focus groups would be in English. Interpreters were available by youth's requests but this option was never implemented. It is unclear as to why some youth chose not to provide any responses. However, all participants did provide written comments on their personal challenges and so their experiences are captured in this report.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

From the perspectives of 125 newcomer youth from five provinces of Canada, they faced tremendous challenges, barriers, and issues as they adjusted and settled into their new lives with their families. It is also important to note that these settlement challenges were in conjunction with adolescent challenges and problems and thus, this period of life had its unique demands on youth's psychological well-being and their social relationships with their families and peers, and community. These issues of being an adolescent, however, were not of particular focus for this present project and thus, further exploration is needed into this developmental period.

This study is one of the first studies to not only explore the settlement challenges but equally important the coping strategies that youth used to deal with their issues. Exploring the *processes* of how newcomers settled into their new lives in Canada allows us, as service providers, educators, school boards, and researchers, to better comprehend the needs of newcomer youth and to capitalize on the programs and services that have been seen as successful by immigrant youth. For instance, the degree to which social supports (formal and informal) facilitated newcomer youths' adjustment varied, as some youth expressed gratitude for supportive peers, teachers, schools, and community groups as others encountered discrimination and racism. With the greater awareness and insight into these issues, immigrant serving agencies and community based organizations are in a better position to create a more effective transition for incoming immigrant and refugee youth.

As some youth have acknowledged, there are many social supports that can help alleviate and ameliorate the settlement process by providing a more "smoother pathway" to success. However, not all youth were aware of the various programs and services that were provided by their schools, local agencies, and communities. Thus, further exploration of how various

communities (schools, immigrant serving agencies, community based agencies) can work together to ensure that all youth are aware of the numerous services and programs to newcomer youth is needed. Also, it is important to engage these youth in the developing and implementation of programs and services as they are "the experts" and have the insider perspective of their adjustment and settlement process. Additionally, these youth provided insightful advice to incoming or recently arrived newcomer youth which was unique to this study. These responses should be further developed and integrated into current services and programs.

Although many youth described how they relied on their personal efforts or characteristics to cope with their challenges (their levels of resliency), this raises several concerns. First, as indicated in the types of coping strategies that they used, there was a significant emphasis on personal onus/responsibility to deal with these challenges. However, such burden is unnecessary and can create additional strain on the individuals' mental and physical health. Second, not all youth had been successful in identifying effective coping strategies. Thus, building upon these present findings, CIC should, through immigrant serving agencies and community based organizations, take advantage of this opportunity to encourage a more pan Canadian vision to provide the necessary programs and services to lessen the settlement challenges newcomer youth face. Building resilience among communities will provide newcomers various avenues that will allow each individual to feel empowered to positively deal with their adjustment and settlement issues, and to feel valued by their communities, and Canada.

The authors heard and found many good practices happening across Canada that are supporting immigrant and refugee youth to enhance their settlement and academic outcomes. The current

capacity to share and build upon these practices on a national basis within the settlement sector is extremely limited. The authors put forward 20 recommendations for future consideration clustered into 5 categories: Language Barriers, Social Inclusion, Peer and Friendship Relations, School and School-Related Issues and General.

Language Barriers

1. Create additional literacy and communication support for newcomer youth that extend from school classes (English as an Additional Language - EAL) by bridging more formalized partnerships between schools and local libraries (and similar community organizations that have literacy support). Such partnerships will create a more resilient and supportive community for newcomer youth as they become more cognizant of their local communities. After school and summer programming operated by immigrant serving agencies as part of a family based case management approach would also greatly enhance the language acquisition process for newcomer youth, in particular, programs that combine academic, social and recreational components in a multicultural environment.

2. Enhance place based programming in immigrant serving agencies as part of family based case management approach. Youth would benefit from more safe and supportive environments to build peer relationships and social support while having opportunities to enhance their language skills. SISO Youth Centre in Hamilton is an example of several successful practices in this area.

3. CIC and Provinces through devolution agreements (BC and Manitoba) should fund English-French adult language programs specifically geared for youth and young adults. LINC and

it's equivalent in BC and Manitoba should include specific settlement language curriculum and program for older youth that are respond to age appropriate instruction and content.

Social Inclusion

1. Implement training sessions and/or workshops in schools is needed on negative behaviours such as racism and discrimination, bullying, for students, teachers, and school administrators. Some newcomer youth stressed the importance of and need to openly discuss these forms of negative behaviours as many believed that some of their adjustment challenges were underpinned by discrimination and racism. For example, some expressed that bullying victims were a result of their ethnicity and immigrant status. Funding to support youth led workshops in schools such as through interactive popular theatre has been used effectively to create more welcoming and inclusive school environments.

2. Teacher training programs as part of core foundational skills required to teach need to include English and French as an Additional Language methodology, the unique needs of EAL-FAL learners including their adjustment and settlement process (e.g., dispelling myths and stereotypes, training teachers on how to ask questions that are culturally responsive and supportive).

3. When a newcomer student, in particular those that don't speak English or French, faces a negative experience e.g. racist or bullying incidents they are not always clear about where they can turn to report and be supported. More support needs to be put in place to deal with this issue - newcomer youth should be able to approach some sort of governing body that would allow them to disclose their negative experiences and to seek solutions in a safe environment.

Peer and Friendship Relations

1. In partnership with Schools and local immigrant serving agencies, CIC, BC and Manitoba governments should create more funding avenues for newcomer youth to build peer networks that focus less on language abilities and more on social and recreational activities (e.g., sports, arts activities). Most newcomer youth would benefit from structured free program particularly during their first summer in Canada. Manitoba through the Needs Centre has some promising practices in this area.

2. Newcomer youth would like more formalized mentorship/buddy/peer support programs in schools and the community that help to create "instant" social networks. Providing newcomer youth led peer support groups in schools, for instance creates opportunities for newcomer youth to build their social capital (social knowledge about their surroundings, social norms and customs) which will ease their adjustment experiences.

3. Newcomer youth indicated a need for more programming that allows them to interact with all of their peers i.e. not exclusive to just new immigrant and refugee youth but Canadian born youth as well.

4. Within teacher training programs and through local school board organized professional development, teachers would greatly benefit from enhanced skills in instructional and curriculum development that can enhance immigrant and refugee learners without creating opportunities for social exclusion (e.g., group projects that are primarily based on language abilities). There are some resources recently developed that begin to support aspects of this recommendation for instance, the BC Ministry of Education 2009 publication called Students From Refugee Backgrounds – A Guide for Teachers and Schools.

School and School-Related Issues

1. Newcomer youth would like more first language school based orientation to better understand the learning environment including norms and values. For instance the role and position of a school based counselor is foreign to many immigrant and refugee youth.

2. Develop longer term social support interventions in schools (buddy, mentoring, peer programs) that are substantive in length of time (e.g., 3 months versus a one day orientation).

3. School related orientation should begin through a pre departure specialized orientation for newcomer youth. CIC should fund the expansion of the Cultural Orientation Abroad Program to offer specific pre departure orientation for youth, ideally delivered by older youth with familiarity on the Canadian educational system. CIC as well as BC and Manitoba governments should jointly fund the curriculum development for a youth specific pre departure orientation program. CIC should also examine the role of social media as a mechanism to strengthen newcomer youth pre departure preparedness process.

4. Local School officials should ensure either through interpreters or Settlement Workers in Schools that newcomer youth but more importantly, that their parents-guardians are aware when their child is moved from an academic to a non academic stream.

General Recommendations

1. There are some good regional practices and orientation materials and resources targeting newcomer youth in multiple languages on the school structure, curriculum, social norms and culture, local transit system etc.) but nothing appears to be in place from a national perspective. CIC should develop a "Welcome to Canada" multilingual survival handbook for newcomer youth that could be provided to youth prior and/or after their arrival in the country. It is critically important that newcomer youth play a leading role in designing such a resource.

2. Teachers would benefit from formalized training on how to mentor newcomer youth as a strategy to enhance their settlement outcomes.

3. Local School Boards through professional development sessions should focus more attention on ways to increase teachers' knowledge and social competence on culture, immigration, diversity, and related issues. One way to undertake this initiative would be through partnerships with local immigrant serving agencies.

4. CIC, BC and Manitoba government should provide funding and develop policy direction on ways to better engage the private sector e.g. local businesses to create apprenticeships or work experience incentives that target newcomer youth.

5. CIC in partnership with other federal departments and provincial ministries should fund a pan Canadian forum/conference on immigrant and refugee youth to advance public policy on ways to increase the settlement and academic outcomes as well as social cohesion of newcomer youth in Canadian society.

6. CIC Refugee Affairs Branch should create a national resettlement assistance orientation program specifically for refugee youth upon their arrival in Canada.

FOOTNOTES

[a] A trained bilingual research assistant translated the transcripts from Spanish to English. A second bilingual person checked for accuracy of the translation.

[b] The Focus Group Facilitators in Québec provided leading questions which prompted comments from respondents that may otherwise not be mentioned. Facilitators' personal experiences were discussed which may have influenced the participants' responses. Also, the questions that were asked were not further probed, resulting in a lower number of youth responses as compared to the other provinces.

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Table 1: *Overall Sample and Number of Newcomer Youth Who Actively Participated in the Focus Groups by Type of Question and*

Gender

Province	Overall Sample and Type of Question/Gender and Subsamples														
	Overall Sample			Individual Challenges			Family Challenges			Coping Strategies			Advice		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
AB	13	11	24	9	10	19	4	3	7	9	7	16	6	3	9
BC	10	13	23	10	13	23	4	6	10	7	9	16	3	11	14
NS	15	11	26	15	11	26	5	-	5	8	9	17	2	4	6
ON	19	13	32	17	11	29	4	3	7	11	12	23	10	9	19
QC	9	11	20	9	7	16	1	-	1	4	4	8	3	8	11
Total	66	59	125	60	52	112	18	12	30	39	41	80	24	35	59

Table 2: *Newcomer Youth's Countries of Origin*

Country	Boys	Girls
Afghanistan	14	3
Algeria	1	-
China	1	13
Colombia	6	12
Congo	-	3
Ecuador	1	-
Egypt	1	1
El Salvador	3	1
Eritrea	-	1
Ethiopia	1	-
Haiti	1	-
Hong Kong	-	1
India	8	7
Iran	6	-
Iraq	-	2
Jordan	2	-
Kenya	-	2
Korea	2	2
Kuwait	2	-
Liberia	2	-
Mexico	4	1

Table 2: *Continued*

Country	Boys	Girls
Morocco	1	-
Myanmar	-	2
Nigeria	-	2
Pakistan	4	3
Romania	1	-
Serbia	1	-
Taiwan	2	1
Thailand	1	2
United States	-	1

Table 3: *Coding System for Newcomer Youth's Personal and Family Challenges*

Topic	Definition
Canadian Culture	
Norms and Customs	General issues about Canadian culture, customs, and society (e.g., ways of behavior)
Canadian Food	Difficulty of finding ethnic foods or adjusting to Canadian food
Dual Culture	
Individual	Personal struggles and issues of balancing native and Canadian cultures and languages
Family	Family struggles or issues of balancing native and Canadian cultures
Environment	
Physical Locations	Physical surroundings (e.g., location of stores)
Weather	General issues about weather in Canada (e.g., snow, cold)
Financial Issues	Issues that are related to finances (e.g., buying clothes, cell phones) and employment, careers, and credentialing
Language Barriers and Acquisition	General communication issues (expressing oneself), assessments, acquisition of learning English, speaking, writing, and accent issues
Language Silo	Using mostly native language and not learning English, creating a silo (segregation) from the mainstream population
Missing Native Country	Missing old friends and extended families or other people
Negative Behaviours	
Anti-Social/Deviant Behaviours	Behaviors that are linked to delinquency and deviancy, including peer pressure, gang related issues, aggression, social exclusion, and bullying

Table 3: *Continued*

Topic	Definition
Discrimination/Racism	Discriminatory or racial behavior towards children/youth, individual/group not identified
Discrimination	
Peer	Discriminatory and racist behaviours and remarks by peers
Teachers	Discriminatory and racist behaviours and remarks by teachers
Administration	Discriminatory and racist behaviours and remarks by the school administration
Parent-Child Relations	Parent-child conflicts, disciplining and abuse issues, relationship changes due to language brokering and role reversal, parental concerns
Parent Separation	Issues surrounding difficulties of children separating from parents
Peer Relationships	
Making Friends	Fitting in, sense of belongingness, and friendship
Language-Related	Language issues in relation to loneliness and lack of friendship
Native Culture/Country	
General	Preferring native culture and country than Canada
Relationships	Viewing one's native culture's values and teachings of relationships as better than the Canadian's (e.g., family cohesion)
School Related Issues	
System, Grading	Issues that are related to school curriculum, rules, regulation, and settings
Academic Performance	Issues related to school grade and performance

Table 3: *Continued*

Topic	Definition
Culture	Issues about school culture and climate (e.g., respecting teachers)
Peer exclusion	Having difficulties in engaging in group projects

Table 4: *Personal Questionnaires – Number of Newcomer Youth Who Mentioned the Challenges by Province and Gender*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	13	11	10	13	15	11	19	13	9	11	66	59	125
Language Barriers	11	7	10	7	12	9	14	8	4	11	51	42	93
Peer Relations[a]	6	3	2	5	7	3	15	9	3	4	33	24	57
Making Friends	4	2	2	4	7	2	13	9	2	4	28	21	49
Language Related	2	1	-	2	-	1	3	-	2	-	7	4	11
School Issues	7	3	3	7	2	7	5	7	1	-	18	24	42
System, Grading	4	2	2	6	2	1	1	5	-	-	9	14	23
Academic Performance	3	1	-	-	-	4	5	1	1	-	9	6	15
Culture	1	-	1	2	-	2	-	1	-	-	2	5	7
Environment	-	1	4	1	3	2	5	8	7	11	19	23	42
Weather	-	1	4	1	-	1	3	4	6	11	13	18	31
Physical Locations	-	-	-	-	3	1	2	4	1	-	6	5	11
Canadian Culture	3	5	2	5	4	2	4	1	3	7	16	20	36
Norms and Customs	1	5	1	4	4	2	1	1	2	7	9	19	28
Canadian Food	2	-	1	1	-	-	3	-	1	-	7	1	8
Financial Issues	1	1	1	4	4	4	5	3	-	-	11	12	23

Table 4: *Continued*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	13	11	10	13	15	11	19	13	9	11	66	59	125
Negative Behaviours [a]	4	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	6	3	9
Anti-Social Behaviours	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
Discrimination/Racism	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	3	3	6
Parent-Child Relationship	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	4
Missing Native Country	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	2	2	4
Dual Culture	-	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	5
Individual	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Family	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3
Prefer Native Culture	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

Note. [a] In each main category (e.g., Peer Relations), the subcategories (e.g., making friends, language related to friends) were coded as mutually exclusive from each other. For example, youth's responses were coded as "1" if they mentioned a making friends and a "1" for language barriers in relation to making friends. However, for the overall frequency of "Peer Relations", the youth's response would only count once and not twice.

Table 5: *Personal Questionnaires – Percentage of Newcomer Youth's Responses of Their Challenges by Province and Gender*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	13	11	10	13	15	11	19	13	9	11	66	59	125
Language Barriers	85	64	100	54	80	82	74	62	44	100	77	71	74
Peer Relations[a]	46	27	40	38	47	27	79	69	33	36	50	41	46
Making Friends	31	18	40	31	47	18	68	69	22	36	42	36	39
Language Related	15	9	-	15	-	9	16	-	22	-	11	7	9
School Issues	54	27	30	54	13	64	26	54	11	-	27	41	34
System, Grading	31	18	20	46	13	9	5	38	-	-	14	24	18
Academic Performance	23	9	-	-	-	36	26	8	11	-	14	10	12
Culture	8	-	10	15	-	18	-	8	-	-	3	8	6
Environment	-	9	40	8	20	18	26	62	78	100	29	39	34
Weather	-	9	40	8	-	9	16	31	67	100	20	31	25
Physical Locations	-	-	-	-	20	9	11	31	11	-	9	8	1
Canadian Culture	23	45	20	38	27	18	21	8	33	64	24	34	29
Norms and Customs	8	45	10	31	27	18	5	8	22	64	14	32	22
Canadian Food	15	-	10	8	-	-	16	-	11	11	11	2	6
Financial Issues	8	9	-	31	27	36	26	23	-	-	17	20	18

Table 5: *Continued*

Challenge	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC		Overall Total		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	13	11	10	13	15	11	19	13	9	11	66	59	125
Negative Behaviours [a]	31	-	-	8	7	9	-	8	11	-	9	5	7
Anti-Social Behaviours	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	3
Discrimination/Racism	8	-	-	8	7	9	-	8	11	-	5	5	5
Parent-Child Relationship	-	-	20	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	3
Missing Native Country	-	-	10	-	-	-	5	15	-	-	3	3	3
Dual Culture	-	27	10	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6	4
Individual	-	9	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2
Family	-	18	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	2
Prefer Native Culture	-	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	2	1

Note. Percentage of endorsements were calculated by the number of responses for a challenge divided by the total number of youth in that group. For example, 92% (12 out of 13) Alberta boys talked about their general language challenges; [a] See *Note* in Table 4 for details.

Table 6: *Focus Groups – Number of Newcomer Youth Who Mentioned the Challenges by Province and Gender*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	9	10	10	13	15	11	17	11	9	7	60	52	112
Language Barriers	7	8	8	11	15	6	8	7	3	2	41	34	75
Negative Behaviours[a]	6	3	6	8	8	6	9	6	7	5	36	28	64
Anti-Social Behaviours	5	2	1	4	5	5	5	2	2	1	18	14	32
Discrimination/Racism	4	1	5	3	5	3	5	-	5	1	24	8	32
Peers	1	1	2	4	1	-	-	3	2	4	6	12	18
Teachers	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	6	6
School Administration	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	4	-	-	2	5	7
Peer Relations	3	4	4	10	10	8	9	6	1	-	27	28	55
Making Friends	2	3	1	8	7	7	5	6	1	-	16	24	40
Language-Related	3	1	4	4	3	3	7	2	-	-	17	10	27
School Issues	6	4	3	10	2	5	12	7	1	1	24	27	51
System, Grading	6	2	2	9	1	5	8	4	1	-	18	20	38
Academic Performance	2	3	2	-	1	1	3	2	-	1	8	7	15
Peer Exclusion	-	-	-	3	-	2	6	3	-	-	6	8	14
Culture	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	5	-	-	1	8	9
Canadian Culture	1	4	8	2	4	4	4	5	4	2	22	17	39
Customs and Norms	1	4	4	2	4	2	3	5	3	1	15	14	29

Table 6: *Continued*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	9	10	10	13	15	11	17	11	9	7	60	52	112
Canadian Food	-	-	4	-	-	4	1	-	1	1	6	5	11
Environment [a]	-	2	5	5	-	4	11	4	4	4	20	19	39
Weather	-	2	5	5	-	4	11	4	4	4	20	19	39
Physical Locations	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	2
Prefer Native Culture	-	-	4	3	4	5	2	-	3	5	13	13	26
General	-	-	4	-	3	5	2	-	2	4	11	9	20
Relationships	-	-	-	3	1	3	-	-	2	5	3	11	14
Missing Native Country	-	-	4	2	3	-	1	6	6	1	14	9	23
Financial Issues	-	3	1	4	-	2	7	-	2	-	10	9	19
Parent-Child Relations	-	1	3	6	-	2	5	1	-	-	8	10	18
Dual Culture	-	6	5	6	-	-	-	-	1	-	6	12	18
Individual	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	3	6
Family	-	5	4	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	11	15
Language Silo	-	5	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	12

Note. ª See *Note* in Table 4 for details.

Table 7: *Focus Groups – Percentage of Newcomer Youth's Responses of Their Challenges by Province and Gender*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	9	10	10	13	15	11	17	11	9	7	60	52	112
Language Barriers	78	80	80	82	100	55	47	64	33	29	68	65	67
Negative Behaviours[a]	67	30	60	62	53	55	53	55	78	71	60	54	57
Anti-Social Behaviours	56	20	10	31	33	45	29	18	22	14	30	27	29
Discrimination/Racism	44	10	50	23	33	27	29	-	56	14	40	15	29
Peers	11	10	20	31	7	-	-	27	22	57	10	23	16
Teachers	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	36	-	-	-	12	5
School Administration	-	-	10	7	-	-	6	36	-	-	3	10	6
Peer Relations	33	40	40	77	67	73	53	55	11	-	46	54	49
Making Friends	22	30	10	62	47	64	36	55	11	-	27	46	36
Language-Related	33	10	40	31	20	27	41	18	-	-	28	19	24
School Issues	67	40	30	77	14	45	71	64	11	14	40	52	46
System, Grading	67	20	20	69	7	45	47	36	11	-	30	38	34
Academic Performance	22	30	20	-	7	9	18	18	-	14	13	13	13
Peer Exclusion	-	-	-	23	-	18	35	27	-	-	10	15	13
Culture	-	-	-	8	7	18	-	45	-	-	2	15	8
Environment	-	20	50	38	-	36	65	36	44	57	33	37	35
Weather	-	20	50	38	-	36	65	36	44	57	33	37	35
Physical Locations	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	3	-	2

Challenge	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	9	10	10	13	15	11	17	11	9	7	60	52	112
Canadian Culture [a]	11	40	80	15	27	36	24	45	44	28	37	34	35
Customs and Norms	11	40	40	15	27	18	18	45	33	14	25	27	26
Canadian Food	-	-	40	-	-	36	6	-	11	14	10	10	10
Missing Native Country	-	-	40	15	20	-	6	55	67	14	23	17	21
Prefer Native Culture [a]	-	-	40	23	27	45	12	-	33	71	22	25	23
General	-	-	40	-	20	45	12	-	22	57	18	17	18
Relationships	-	-	-	23	7	27	-	-	22	71	5	21	13
Financial Issues	-	30	10	31	-	18	41	-	22	-	17	17	17
Parent-Child Relations	-	10	30	46	-	18	29	9	-	-	13	19	16
Dual Culture	-	60	50	46	-	-	-	-	11	-	1	23	16
Individual	-	30	22	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	5	6	5
Family	-	50	44	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	21	13
Language Silo	-	50	40	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	15	11

Note. [a] See *Note* in Table 4 for details.

Table 8: *Personal Quesionnaires and Focus Groups: Percentage of Newcomer Youth's Responses of Their Challenges by Province and Gender for Alberta, British Columbia, and Nova Scotia*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Methodology											
	AB				BC				NS			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	Q[a]	FG[b]	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG
Language Barriers	85	78	64	80	100	80	54	84	80	100	82	55
Peer Relations[c]	46	33	27	40	40	40	38	77	47	67	27	73
Making Friends	31	22	18	30	40	10	31	62	47	47	18	64
Language Related	15	33	9	10	-	40	15	31	-	20	9	27
School Issues	62	67	27	40	30	30	54	77	13	14	64	45
System, Grading	31	67	18	20	20	20	40	69	13	7	9	45
Academic Performance	23	22	9	30	-	20	-	-	-	7	36	9
Peer Exclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	-	-	-	18
Culture	8	-	-	-	10	-	15	8	-	-	18	18
Environment	-	-	9	20	40	50	8	38	20	-	18	36
Weather	-	-	9	20	40	50	8	38	-	-	9	36
Physical Ecology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	9	-
Canadian Culture	23	11	45	40	20	80	38	15	27	33	18	36
Customs and Norms	8	11	45	40	10	40	31	15	27	33	18	18
Canadian Food	15	-	-	-	10	40	8	-	-	-	-	36

Table 8: *Continued*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Methodology											
	AB				BC				NS			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	Q[a]	FG[b]	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG
Negative Behaviours[c]	31	67	-	30	-	60	8	62	7	53	9	55
Anti-Social Behaviours	31	56	-	20	-	10	-	31	-	33	-	45
Discrimination/Racism	8	44	-	10	-	50	8	23	7	33	9	27
Peers	-	11	-	10	-	20	-	31	-	7	-	-
Teacher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-
School Administration	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	7	-	-	-	-
Financial Issues	8	-	9	30	10	10	31	31	27	-	36	18
Parent-Child Relations	-	-	-	10	20	30	15	46	-	-	-	18
Missing Native Country	-	-	-	-	10	40	-	15	-	20	-	-
Dual Culture	-	-	27	60	10	50	8	46	-	-	-	-
Individual	-	-	9	30	-	22	8	-	-	-	-	-
Family	-	-	18	50	10	44	-	46	-	-	-	-
Language Silo	-	-	-	50	-	40	-	23	-	-	-	-
Prefer Native Culture	-	-	-	-	-	40	-	23	-	27	9	45
General	-	-	-	-	-	40	-	-	-	20	9	45
Relationships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	-	7	-	27

Note. [a] Q refers to Personal Questionnaire; [b] FG refers to Focus Group; [c] See *Note* in Table 4 for details.

Table 9: *Personal Questionnaires and Focus Groups: Percentage of Newcomer Youth's Responses of Their Challenges by Province and Gender for Ontario, Québec, and Overall Sample*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Methodology								Overall Total					
	ON				QC									
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls		Total	
	Q^a	FG^b	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG
Language Barriers	74	47	62	64	44	33	100	29	77	68	71	65	74	67
Peer Relations[c]	79	53	69	55	33	11	36	-	50	45	41	54	46	49
Making Friends	68	30	69	55	22	11	36	-	42	27	36	46	39	36
Language Related	16	41	-	18	22	-	-	-	11	28	7	19	9	24
School Issues	26	71	54	64	11	11	-	14	27	40	41	52	34	46
System, Grading	5	47	38	36	-	11	-	-	14	30	24	38	18	34
Academic Performance	26	18	8	18	11	-	-	14	14	13	10	13	12	13
Peer Exclusion	-	35	-	27	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	15	-	13
Culture	-	-	8	45	-	-	-	-	3	-	8	15	6	7
Environment	26	65	62	36	78	44	100	57	29	33	39	37	34	35
Weather	16	65	31	36	67	44	100	57	20	33	31	37	25	35
Physical Locations	11	12	31	-	11	-	-	-	9	3	8	-	1	2
Canadian Culture	21	24	8	45	33	44	64	28	24	37	34	33	29	35
Customs and Norms	5	18	8	45	22	33	64	14	14	27	32	27	22	27
Canadian Food	16	6	-	-	11	11	11	14	11	10	2	10	6	10

Table 9: *Continued*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Methodology								Overall Total					
	ON				QC									
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls		Total	
	Q[a]	FG[b]	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG	Q	FG
Negative Behaviours[c]	-	53	8	55	11	78	-	71	9	60	5	54	7	57
Anti-social Behaviours	-	29	-	18	-	22	-	14	6	30	-	27	3	29
Discrimination/Racism	-	29	8	-	11	56	-	14	5	40	5	15	5	29
Peer	-	-	-	27	-	22	-	57	-	10	-	23	-	16
Teacher	-	-	-	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	6
School Administration	-	6	-	36	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	5
Financial Issues	26	41	23	-	-	22	-	-	17	17	20	17	18	17
Parent-Child Relations	-	29	-	9	-	-	-	-	3	13	3	19	3	16
Missing Native Country	5	16	15	55	-	67	-	14	3	23	3	17	3	21
Dual Culture	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	2	1	6	23	4	16
Individual	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	5	3	6	2	5
Family	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7	3	21	2	13
Language Silo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	15	-	11
Prefer Native Culture	-	12	-	-	-	33	-	71	-	22	2	25	1	23
General	-	12	-	-	-	22	-	57	-	18	2	17	1	18
Relationships	-	-	-	-	-	22	-	71	-	5	-	21	-	13

Note. [a] Q means Personal Questionnaire; [b] FG means Focus Group; [c] See *Note* in Table 4 for details.

Table 10: *Focus Groups – Number of Newcomer Youth Who Mentioned the Perceived Family Challenges by Province and Gender*

Challenge	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	4	3	4	6	5	0	4	3	1	0	18	12	30
Money	3	3	3	6	4	-	4	3	-	-	14	12	26
Language Barrieres	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	-	3
Discrimination/Racism	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	2	1	3
Parent Separation	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2

Table 11: *Focus Groups – Percentage of Newcomer Youth's Responses of Perceived Family Challenges by Province and Gender*

Challenges	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	4	3	4	6	5	0	4	3	1	0	18	12	30
Money	75	100	75	100	80	-	100	100	-	-	78	100	87
Language Barriers	25	-	-	-	-	-	25	-	-	-	17	-	10
Discrimination/Racism	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	33	100	-	11	8	10
Parent Separation	-	-	33	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	7

Note. [a] See *Note* in Table 4 for details.

Table 12: *Coding System for Newcomer Youth's Coping Strategies and Advice for New*

Immigrants

Topic	Definition
Be Realistic/Patient	Acknowledging the difficulties and the amount of time and effort that will be needed to adjust, being patient
Books, TV, Media	Reading books, watching TV, or using the internet etc.
Choosing Friends	Choosing friends who can help in schooling, providing information, or teaching/guiding the development of special skills
Community Resources	Using the library, community agencies, youth centres, etc.
Family Support	Using family members for assistance
Friend/Peer Support	Using friends for assistance
Ignore Negativity	Not listening to negative comments or acknowledge negative behaviours
Personal Characteristics	Being confident, speaking up for oneself, not being shy
Practicing Skills	Learning techniques, working hard, practicing new skills
Rely on One's Culture	Relying on one's own native culture and language, teaching people about one's culture
Teachers and Schools	Asking teachers for help or using school programs and services

Table 13: *Focus Groups – Number of Newcomer Youth Who Mentioned the Coping Strategies by Province and Gender*

Coping Strategies	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	9	7	7	9	8	9	11	12	4	4	39	41	80
Books, TV, Media	5	4	2	8	1	1	3	9	-	-	11	22	33
Teachers and Schools	5	3	4	2	1	5	4	3	-	-	14	13	27
Personal Characteristics	3	1	1	1	2	6	2	6	-	2	8	16	24
Practicing Skills	4	1	-	6	-	3	4	4	-	-	8	14	22
Friend/Peer Support	2	2	4	2	-	3	6	2	-	-	12	9	21
Rely on One's Culture	-	2	1	-	2	-	-	1	3	2	6	5	11
Community Resources	-	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	-	-	3	6	9
Choosing Friends	1	-	1	-	1	-	4	-	-	1	7	1	8
Ignore Negativity	-	-	1	-	3	-	2	-	1	-	7	-	7
Be Realistic/Patient	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	3
Family Support	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

Table 14: *Focus Groups – Percentage of Newcomer Youth's Responses of the Coping Strategies by Province and Gender*

Coping Strategies	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		ON		QC		NS				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	9	7	6	10	11	12	4	4	8	9	38	42	80
Books, TV, Media	56	57	33	80	27	75	-	-	13	11	29	52	41
Teachers and Schools	56	43	50	30	36	25	-	-	13	56	34	33	34
Personal Characteristics	33	14	17	10	18	50	-	50	25	67	21	38	30
Practicing Skills	44	14	-	60	36	33	-	-	-	33	21	33	28
Friend/Peer Support	22	29	67	20	55	17	-	-	-	33	32	21	26
Rely on One's Culture	-	29	-	10	-	8	75	50	25	-	13	14	14
Community Resources	-	14	17	10	9	8	-	-	13	33	8	14	11
Choosing Friends	11	-	17	-	36	-	-	25	13	-	18	2	10
Ignore Negativity	-	-	17	-	18	-	25	-	38	-	18	-	9
Be Realistic/Patient	-	-	-	-	27	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	4
Family Support	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	1

Note. [a] See *Note* in Table 4 for details.

Table 15: *Focus Groups – Number of Newcomer Youth Who Provided Advice for New Immigrants by Province and Gender*

Coping Strategies	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	6	3	3	11	2	4	10	9	3	8	24	35	59
Personal Characteristics	3	1	-	6	-	2	6	7	2	5	11	21	32
Rely on One's Culture	-	2	1	2	1	1	-	3	-	-	2	8	10
Friend/Peer Support	2	1	-	4	-	-	-	1	1	-	3	6	9
Choosing Friends	1	-	1	2	-	1	1	1	-	2	3	6	9
Teachers and Schools	2	-	-	2	-	1	3	-	-	-	5	3	8
Community Resources	1	-	-	3	1	-	1	-	1	-	4	3	7
Engage in Activities	3	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	5	1	6
Books, TV, Media	2	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	3	6
Ignore Negativity	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	2	1	4	2	6
Practice Skills	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	3	4
Be Realistic/Patient	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	3

Table 16: *Focus Groups – Percentage of Youth's Responses of Advice for New Immigrants by Province and Gender*

Coping Strategies	Province/Gender/Subsample										Overall Total		
	AB		BC		NS		ON		QC				
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
	6	3	3	11	2	4	10	9	3	8	24	35	59
Personal Characteristics	50	33	-	55	-	50	60	78	67	63	46	60	54
Rely on One's Culture	-	67	33	18	50	25	-	33	-	-	8	23	17
Friend/Peer Support	33	33	-	36	-	-	-	11	33	-	13	17	15
Choosing Friends	17	-	-	18	-	25	10	11	-	25	13	17	15
Teachers and Schools	33	-	-	18	-	25	30	-	-	-	21	9	14
Community Resources	17	-	-	27	50	-	10	-	33	-	17	9	12
Engage in Activities	50	-	-	9	-	-	10	-	33	-	21	3	10
Books, TV, Media	33	-	-	27	-	-	-	-	33	-	13	9	10
Ignore Negativity	-	-	-	9	-	-	20	-	67	13	17	6	10
Practice Skills	-	-	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	38	4	9	7
Be Realistic/Patient	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	-	-	-	13	-	5

Note. [a] See *Note* in Table 4 for details.