Towards a New Model for Preparing Older Immigrant Youth to Study and Work in Canada

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Objective of the study

- **To develop an effective approach to support and prepare older immigrants youth to enter into educational and employment sectors.**

Background

- Collaboration: UBC, the School of Social Work & MOSAIC, Settlement Organization (Vancouver)
  - MOSAIC: designed and delivered the youth program , FreeRunning
  - UBC: research component & design
- FreeRunning, MOSAIC
  - a demonstration project funded by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development
  - to facilitate the settlement process (education, training and employment) of multi-barriered refugee youth aged 15-25
- Participant: August 2009 and July 2010
  - 50 youths, 33 male and 17 female
  - Eritrean (n 35), Vietnam, Bhutan, Iraq, Iran, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Ethiopia and Senegal

METHODOLOGY: QUALITATIVE STUDY

- **Utilization-focused evaluation**: As a utilization-focused evaluation, the study aims to focus on improving the effectiveness of the program and enhancing its use in future programming, particularly model development.
- **Data Collection**: Youth participants & Stakeholders
  - Focus groups, exit interviews, activity evaluation survey and follow up interview
  - 20 youth participated in the focus group discussions and 15 -15 in an interview upon exit and a follow-up interview
- **Analysis:** A grounded theory method was used to analyze the data. Analytic induction and constant comparison strategies (Glasser and Strauss, 1967) helped find patterns in the primary data (observation, focus group, surveys, exit interviews) and secondary information (project progress report).
- The baseline expectations of youth participants collected from initial focus group interviews were compared with exit interviews and three-month follow-up phone interview data to measure a set of intended outcomes and evaluate the existing model.
- To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, the triangulated data were compared to see if there were any patterns or contradictions, and findings were discussed FR staff and interpreted by settlement and integration literature and theories.

Needs of the **Older Immigrants Youth** : Short & Long Term

Short-term needs

- understanding of basic services and resources,
- orientation to the Canadian system (law, regulation, education and employment)
- English-language acquisition
- building relationships
- temporary employment.

Long-term needs

- obtaining stable employment
- learning a higher level of English
- family reunification
- pursuing higher education or vocational training.

Major activities & interventions of FR

- **Client assessment and action planning**
- **Functional language, computer training and skill workshops**
- **Case management including counselling and transitioning**
- **Volunteer placement**

Program outcome

- Adjustment to job market, school and vocational training
- Increased confidence
- *"Yes, it has built my self-confidence and taught me about Canadian system" (Female participant)*

INTEGRATED PROGRAM MODEL

- **Why integrated program model?**
  - Diverse needs (language, employment, etc.)
  - Individual & group process
  - worked best in FR case

Five Key Principles

- **Flexibility**: multiple entries, scheduling.
- **Step-wise approach** according to individual progress and needs: ensure successful movement.
- **Integrative perspective:** individual and group process, language/employment/skills training.
- **Mutually directed:** case manager and participant discussion, allow for maximum customization.
- **Incentives:** progression and fiscal incentive to keep the motivation going.

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