PERSPECTIVES ON PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL APPROACHES TO SETTLEMENT AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

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Provinces and territories work with the Government of Canada, formally and informally, on immigrant settlement and integration programs and services. This article takes a glimpse at the partnership across elements of the immigration continuum, from attraction and selection to settlement and integration, and identifies some of the challenges jurisdictions face in this work and opportunities to using the FPT partnership to improve immigrant outcomes.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Government of Ontario, other Provinces or Territories, or of the Provincial-Territorial collective.

Given its authorities under the Québec-Canada Accord on Immigration, *Québec participates in the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration as an observer only. As a result, the Province of Québec does not fall within the scope of this paper.*

Many conversations about immigration reflect that immigration is a shared responsibility under Canada's Constitution. This one is no different; the reminder of a shared jurisdiction helps frame discussions of the roles each order of government play in supporting immigrant settlement and integration (including official language training, traditional "settlement services", labour market integration and foreign qualification recognition, among others).

Despite working together to varying degrees for decades on the integration of newcomers to Canada, both multilaterally and bilaterally, it wasn't until 2008 that the Federal-Provincial/Territorial (FPT) immigration forum became co-chaired by a province or territory (PT) and CIC.[1] One of the responsibilities of the co-Chair PT is to form a Secretariat, which, on behalf of all PTs, develops strategic advice and positions, coordinates work among PTs and between PTs and CIC, and provides secretarial support to the PT and FPT Assistant Deputy Minister, Deputy Minister, and Ministers' tables.[2] Through this work, the Secretariat takes a bird's eye view of the immigration and integration landscape, and endeavours to make connections and identify gaps between and across the work of 14 jurisdictions. While not written on behalf of PTs, and in no way claiming to speak for them, it is through this perspective that we approach this article.

At the same time, this article is not a research paper; it is an overview of how PTs (not including Quebec) approach settlement and integration of immigrants, how their activities intersect with CIC's efforts in this area and the challenges that lie therein, and then takes a snapshot of the road ahead to present some guiding questions to consider for future directions in federal, provincial and pan-Canadian settlement policy and collaboration. This article is deliberately high-level because it is difficult to succinctly (and accurately) capture individual PT approaches and investments in the space allotted. Indeed, that would make for a very different paper.[3]

Immigrant settlement occurs along a continuum spanning from initial immigrant attraction and selection to successful social and economic integration. While this may seem like a straight forward pathway, efforts to link current federal and PT mechanisms for success along the continuum present a formidable challenge, in a world where federal and PT methods do not always align. As we move through a period of system transformation, it is likely that the lines will blur further.

CIC and PTs work toward successful immigration settlement and integration in different ways, through diverse programs and services that use various funding mechanisms. Adding to the diversity of programs and services are the many definitions and interpretations of settlement services, from the promotion of human services available to all residents of a PT to a significant dedicated settlement/integration envelope, and everything in between. This variety reinforces the uniqueness of each jurisdiction, and also highlights the challenge of how to complement federal services, which are becoming increasingly uniform across Canada.

Identifying successful practices and determining resources spent on settlement and integration programming continues to be a challenge. In our view, the re-centralization of CIC's Settlement Program to its headquarters in Ottawa from its regional offices appears to limit flexibility in programming across Canada, with a focus more on the services and funding thereof, rather than the outcomes the program aims to achieve for newcomers and communities. Nonetheless, this is a challenge that jurisdictions will try to overcome. The FPT immigration forum recognizes this ongoing need and the Joint FPT Vision for Immigration and associated Action Plan[4] includes ambitious goals related to settlement and integration under the strategic objective, "Improved economic and social settlement and integration outcomes".

The expected results for settlement under the current FPT Vision Action Plan are: *1)* Coordinated, seamless settlement service delivery focused on reducing barriers to social and economic integration, including barriers to labour market participation; and *2)* Continuous assessment of newcomer settlement outcomes based on common measurement mechanisms across jurisdictions. The most exciting deliverable thus far is a new plan to improve settlement outcomes for newcomers across Canada (endorsed by Ministers on March 18, 2014[5]), which was informed by the results of a national outcomes survey administered in 2012. By continuing to develop the evidence base and mutual objectives for settlement outcomes, PTs and CIC can better work together on initiatives like federal settlement reform, identify the intersections between CIC and PT programming, and chart a course for future work. At the same time, PTs should use this opportunity to reflect on individual PT programs and services, continue to build multilateral and bilateral partnerships, and explore collective PT opportunities (foreign qualification assessment and online tools immediately come to mind). Indeed, as federal programming becomes more consistent across Canada, PTs should consider the best ways to proactively influence federal policy and programs.

One area of joint interest, responsibility, and priority is foreign qualification recognition. The implementation of labour mobility, the adoption of the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (under the Forum of Labour Market Ministers[6]), changes to Federal Skilled Worker program to require education credential assessments (ECA), and the recent adoption of the Express Entry application management system[7], amplify how complicated this area is: regulated professions and trades fall under PT responsibility and the independent regulatory bodies therein. Some PTs have fair access legislation and officials responsible for fairness, while others do not. The Pan-Canadian Framework, for its part, is being implemented with an occupation-based approach. And then there is ECA, which was developed and announced without working with PTs on possible risks, opportunities, or implications.

Another area of joint interest and renewed FPT collaboration is how the immigrant settlement journey starts at the time of selection. While Express Entry is owned and run by the Government of Canada, FPT officials were tasked by Ministers to design and implement a model that reflects the needs of Canada and all PTs. Express Entry is meant to be fast, flexible and responsive to the labour market, which means an increased role for both PTs and employers in selection. As the mechanism through which governments and employers are to actively attract and select immigrants (and possible future Canadian citizens), we should consider using Express Entry to start successful social and economic settlement and integration by connecting immigrants with resources to prepare them for life and work in Canada before they arrive. Another player in this concept is the municipality; given their strong employer connections and central role in the delivery of human and immigration services, municipalities and community members are well placed to support the immigrant settlement journey from start to finish.

At the same time, there are other influences and changes to the immigration landscape, such as new refugee determination policies, family reunification modifications, and reforms to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and International Mobility Program, to name a few. While PT influence and areas of responsibility are limited in the front end of these policy changes, they all intersect with federal, PT, and FPT

settlement and integration decisions and activities: as selection changes, so too do the needs of those being admitted and welcomed to Canada.

We are at a critical time in the maturation of the immigration system. The partnerships between and among governments, and relationships with stakeholders and others will continue to evolve over time. And so, we present a few questions to consider now and in the future:

- What are the opportunities for PT influence of federal and FPT efforts now?
- How do we advance the FQR discourse, including the implications of Express Entry?
- What is the best way to share immigrant outcomes information with each other and with the public?
- What are the implications of the growth of two-step migration of TFWs and international students ("immigrants in waiting")?
- Where do secondary migration and circular migration fit into the equation?
- How can the challenges, opportunities, and benefits of immigration be communicated to partners, potential partners, stakeholders, and the public?

As always, there are more questions than answers… But, before throwing our arms up in despair, we remind ourselves that settlement programming —and by that we mean improving immigrant outcomes— is about affecting individual success. It is what drives us to keep the conversation going, look for solutions, identify best practices, and to challenge the status quo.

NOTES

[1] The Forum is co-chaired through the Deputy Minister level starting in 2008; the Terms of Reference were not amended to have the Ministers' Forum co-chaired until 2012.

[2] As requested by the Government of Quebec, the Quebec Minister Responsible for Immigration holds observer status at the FPT Minister's forum for immigration.

[3] Much of the existing literature that compares PT roles in immigration is dated because of the speed at which the immigration landscape is changing. That said, we suggest Integration and Inclusion of Newcomers and Minorities across Canada (Biles, Burstein, Frideres, Tolley and Vineberg, 2011) for an overview.

[4] www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2012/2012-11-16.asp

[5] www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2014/2014-03-18.asp

[6] www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/credential_recognition/foreign/framework.shtml

[7] www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/express/express-entry.asp

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PERSPECTIVES SUR LES APPROCHES PROVINCIALES/TERRITORIALES ENVERS L'ÉTABLISSEMENT ET POSSIBILITÉ DE CHANGEMENT

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Les provinces et les territoires travaillent avec le gouvernement du Canada, de façon formelle et informelle, à l'élaboration de programmes et de services destinés à l'établissement et l'intégration des immigrants. Cet article est un survol des partenariats entre divers éléments sur le continuum de l'immigration (continuum allant de l'attrait et de la sélection des immigrants à leur établissement et intégration) et identifie certains des défis auxquelles les différentes compétences font face lors de ce travail et les possibilités d'utiliser le partenariat FPT pour améliorer les résultats d'établissement des immigrants.

Les opinions exprimées dans cet article sont celles des auteures et ne représentent pas nécessairement les opinions du Gouvernement de l'Ontario, celles des autres provinces ou territoires, ou celles de l'association provinciale territoriale.

En vertu de l'Accord Québec-Canada relatif à l'immigration, le Québec participe au Forum des ministres responsables de l'immigration uniquement en tant qu'observateur. Par conséquent, les propos exposés dans l'article suivant ne s'appliquent pas à la province de Québec.

La majorité des conversations à propos de l'immigration débutent par : « Selon la Constitution canadienne, l'immigration est un domaine de compétences partagées ». La discussion suivante n'est pas différente ; garder à l'esprit que l'immigration relève du partage des responsabilités nous aide à cadrer la discussion suivante à propos du rôle que chaque palier gouvernemental joue dans le domaine de l'établissement et de l'intégration (ce qui comprend, entre autres, l'enseignement des langues officielles, les « services d'établissement » traditionnels, l'intégration au marché de l'emploi et la reconnaissance des titres de compétences étrangers).

Malgré le travail effectué en commun à divers degrés durant des décennies sur l'intégration des nouveaux arrivants au Canada grâce à des ententes multilatérales et bilatérales, ce n'est qu'en 2008 que le forum sur l'immigration entre le fédéral et le provincial/territorial (FTP) a été coprésidé par une province ou un territoire (PT) et CIC[1]. Une des responsabilités de la province ou du territoire (PT) nommé au poste de coprésident est de former un secrétariat, qui, au nom de tous les PTs, formule des conseils et des prises de position stratégique, coordonne le travail entre les PTs et entre les PTs et CIC, et accorde un appui administratif au sous-ministre adjoint, au sous-ministre et aux conseils de ministres de la FTP et des PTs[2]. Lors de l'exécution de ces multiples tâches, le secrétariat tente d'acquérir une vue d'ensemble du paysage de l'im-