NOTES

[1] Le Forum est co-présidé par des sous-ministres depuis 2008 ; les termes de référence n'ont pas été modifiée jusqu'en 2012 afin de permettre aux ministres de coprésider.

[2] À la demande du gouvernement du Québec, le ministre responsable de l'immigration du Québec détient un statut d'observateur au Forum sur l'immigration des ministres FPT.

[3] Une grande partie de la littérature existante qui compare les rôles des PT en immigration n'est pas à jour en raison de la vitesse à laquelle le paysage de l'immigration évolue. Ceci dit, pour avoir une idée générale, nous suggérons de consulter Integration and Inclusion of Newcomers and Minorities across Canada (Biles , Burstein , Frideres , Tolley et Vineberg , 2011).

[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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CANADIAN ORIENTATION ABROAD: MAXIMIZING PRE-DEPARTURE PREPARATION OF NEWCOMERS TO CANADA

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Pre-departure orientation continues to emerge as a key settlement and integration measure to prepare and empower migrants through the provision of targeted information and resources. Since the end of the 1950s, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has provided pre-departure orientation services across the world. In partnership with the Government of Canada, the IOM implements the Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) project, the largest of three pre-departure orientation projects currently offered to Canada-bound migrants. With an emphasis on the COA project, this article discusses the impact of pre-departure orientation on newcomers as well as innovative practices that contribute to maximise the preparation of newcomers while still abroad.

Every year, tens of thousands of migrants participate in pre-departure orientation programming worldwide. Pre-departure orientation can be provided through different means (e.g. group orientation, individual counselling, online, or in-person), to different clientele (e.g. refugees, temporary and permanent migrants, international students, international professionals) and by different stakeholders (e.g. states at both the sending and receiving ends, universities, employers and relevant institutions). This paper focuses on the provision of pre-departure orientation, sometimes also known as cultural orientation, to migrants selected for permanent residency.

A pioneer in delivering orientation to migrants, the IOM identifies three core components of most pre-departure orientation programmes (IOM, 2004):

- Factual information about the country of destination.
- Assistance in developing the skills needed to succeed in a new environment.
- Information on the attitudes necessary for successful integration.

According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), pre-departure orientation programming provides newcomers with relevant, accurate, consistent and timely information needed to make informed settlement decisions and access settlement services. Furthermore, it promotes a contextual understanding of life in Canada, including laws, rights and the democratic system (CIC, 2011 and 2012).

CIC currently funds three in-person pre-departure orientation projects that "do not overlap with one another as they have different objectives, locations and offerings" (CIC, 2012).

The *Active Engagement and Integration Project* (AEIP), administered by S.U.C.C.E.S.S., is a pre-departure service offered to immigrants and caregivers. From its inception in 2008 up to September 2014, AEIP served 5,803 clients in two training sites: South Korea and Taiwan. AEIP's service con-

sists of a two-hour orientation session, followed by topic-specific workshops and post-landing connections.

The *Canadian Immigrant Integration Program* (CIIP), administered by Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan), is a pre-departure service offered to federal skilled workers, provincial nominees and their spouses and adult dependents. From its inception in 2006 up to September 2014, CIIP served 27,666 clients through in-person and online sessions. CIIP provides orientation in multiple locations out of four permanent training sites: China, India, the Philippines and the UK/Gulf. CIIP's service consists of a one-day group orientation session, individual planning and onwards referrals.

The *Canadian Orientation Abroad* (COA) project, implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), is a pre-departure service offered to refugees, federal skilled workers, provincial nominees, family class immigrants, caregivers and spouses and dependents, including youth aged 12 to 19. From its inception in 1998 up to September 2014, COA served 181,361 clients in over 45 locations[1]. COA currently operates 16 permanent training sites overseas. COA's service consists of a three-day orientation program for refugees and one-day program for immigrants and caregivers.

Following the recent call for proposals for pre-arrival settlement support, more in-person and online services may be funded by the Government of Canada in the future.

IOM ORIENTATION PROGRAMMING AND COA

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration, implementing approximately 2,600 projects in 481 field locations overseas. Over the past two decades, IOM has played an ever-increasing role in support of Canada's international and national migration objectives, initiating a number of activities with Federal, Provincial and Territorial stakeholders. IOM notably supports Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) through a number of pre- and post-arrival programs, including transportation assistance and coordination, health assessments, visa application and overseas orientation.

As stated in the latest Evaluation of Canada's membership in the IOM, immigration-related services provided by IOM lead to significant administrative gains and operational efficiencies. As such, few alternatives "*provide the reach, quality of service or cost-effectiveness that IOM does for CIC's core migration services*".

IOM has a proven record in administering Migrant Training and Integration activities. Drawing upon established programming and networks, IOM delivers pre-departure orientation to over 40,000 migrants every year[2]. The organization has several flagship orientation programmes including the United States Cultural Orientation (USCO), the Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO), the Norwegian Cultural Orientation (NORCO) and Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA).

COA is the second largest pre-departure orientation project implemented by IOM. It was created in 1998 and initially offered in Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Kenya, Macedonia, Serbia and Vietnam. To ensure access to orientation, the COA project soon extended its reach beyond permanent training sites, providing mobile sessions in various remote locations. Over the years, COA has increased its capacity and demonstrated its flexibility and ability in providing training under a myriad of different and challenging circumstances[3]. In 2013, COA began operating at the Syria-Lebanon border, providing orientation briefings to Iraqi refugees transported from Damas to the Beirut International airport, en route to Canada.

Every year, COA provides training to approximately 13,000 Canada-bound migrants, including refugees (44%); federal skilled workers and provincial nominees (FSWs and PNs – 30%); members of the family class (FC – 15%); Caregivers (9%); and immigrant investors (2%). Between 2005-06 and 2011-12, COA reached up to 56% of refugees, 21% of FSWs, PNs, FC and 17% of caregivers in countries where it is active (CIC, 2012).

COA provides eligible beneficiaries with accurate information about life in Canada, helping them establish realistic expectations while developing the skills and awareness necessary to successfully adapt to their new life. In order to effectively tackle information needs and gaps, COA has developed tailored curricula (Immigrants, Refugee and Youth Refugees) and resources, including a handbook, a refugee workbook, province-specific and topic-specific modules (Settling in Francophone Minority Communities; LGBTQ support services;, etc.), as well as factsheets and self-learning tools.

COA training materials encompass essentials topics such as employment, education, housing, health, life in Canada, access to citizenship and settlement services. Curricula for FSWs, PNs and FC focuses on credential recognition, employment and labour market information while that for caregivers emphasizes labour law and individual rights. All four groups participate in a one-day group orientation (7-8 hours) while refugees are provided with a three-day group orientation (15 hours). IOM ensures that clients in need may also access support services, including child-minding and travel reimbursement. Training to non-refugee participants is delivered in English or French while refugees are provided with orientation in their mother tongue.

PREPARING MIGRANTS TO ENHANCE INTEGRATION OUTCOMES

According to CIC, "information and orientation sessions have a big impact on immigrants' ability to settle" (CIC, 2011). The results of the 2012 *Evaluation of Overseas Orientation Initiatives* clearly demonstrated that participants who availed of pre-departure orientation services took advantage of the time between orientation and departure to adjust their strategy; felt more prepared for the move; knew what they needed to do upon arrival and; were more likely to use settlement services upon arrival.

With matters specifically related to refugees, another evaluation report found that government assisted refugees who accessed pre-departure orientation were adequately prepared for their arrival in Canada; were provided with accurate information to counteract inaccurate information received from other refugees; and built the correct mind-set by preparing for life in Canada (CIC, 2011).

Evaluative research indicates that all immigrant categories can benefit from pre-departure orientation (CIC, 2012). However, vulnerable groups such as refugees are commonly identified as primary target groups for in-person orientation. Recent research findings indicate that vulnerability – literacy level, language skills, immigration status, gender, health – remains a critical factor in determining settlement service needs (BCSS, 2014). However, literature also suggests that cultural background and social capital could be more decisive than standard immigrant categories in determining the need for pre-arrival preparation support.

Preliminary findings from the Western Canada Settlement Survey and the Alberta Settlement Survey indicate that between 52% and 66% of the newcomers surveyed did not use settlement services upon arrival in Canada (Wilkinson, 2014). Interestingly enough, two of the three main reasons mentioned for not using settlement services were a lack of information or awareness of services (26.6%) and confusion about who to go to in order to get help (17.4%). The *Evaluation of Overseas Orientation Initiatives* has shown that the newcomers who do not access pre-departure orientation use settlement services "significantly less" than the ones who did. Pre-departure orientation can therefore be seen as an important tool to increase post-arrival settlement services intake.

A widely-recognized outcome of pre-departure orientation is the management of expectations. Building realistic expectations helps migrants cope with initial settlement challenges and reduces anxiety and depression – factors that significantly inhibit integration and "cause undue pressure on the social service providers in host communities" (UNHCR, 2011). Given that the primary outcome of pre-departure orientation is to allow migrants to make informed decisions about their upcoming move to Canada, the timing of the orientation is also critical. Because 75% of the respondents surveyed by CIC indicated that they made changes with respect to at least one area following the orientation session, "taking orientation between 1 and 6 months before departure" is considered optimal (CIC, 2012).

By providing timely information on labour market, credential assessment and licensing processes, orientation helps skilled immigrants "enter the labour force [more quickly and] obtain jobs that appropriately reflect their academic background and work experience" (Adams, 2007). Indeed, close to 60% of the respondents surveyed by CIC in 2012 stated that pre-departure orientation helped them to prepare for employment.

According to the G8 Expert Roundtable on Diversity and Integration, "integration supports made available to migrants upon arrival are likely to be more effective when they continue an integration process that started prior to arrival".

Overseas orientation service providers can contribute to post-arrival preparation, notably through first-hand accounts of group-specific characteristics and challenges (e.g. via cultural and medical profiles) as well as individual needs assessments (Stephen, 2013). IOM has prepared numerous such profiles and assessments to assist in the resettlement of refugees in Canada[4]. Sharing this information with Canadian stakeholders has proved to be instrumental in helping communities to plan and adapt settlement services (Presse, 2007; Sherrell, 2011). Reciprocally, the input of domestic settlement agencies is imperative to provide migrants with relevant, accurate, consistent and timely orientation programs both pre- and post-arrival.

CONCLUSION

Pre-departure orientation is a key tool that facilitates settlement and accelerates social and economic integration. As such, it must be viewed as an integral part of settlement and integration services. Specifically, it helps migrants prepare for the journey, set realistic goals, assess what needs to be done and efficiently make use of the services available upon arrival.

Over the past decade, major strides and a great deal of investment have been made in the settlement sector, including in pre-arrival support services. Nowadays, the focus has shifted to strengthening the linkages between overseas and domestic SPOs, thereby ensuring that newcomers are provided with a seamless set of services along the integration continuum. It is through the leveraging of partners' strengths and through innovative models of collaboration, that refugees and immigrants' prospects for a successful integration are increased and assured. Building on IOM' experience and capacity to innovate by developing strategic partnerships with key

stakeholders, COA is determined to provide Canada-bound migrants with a strong and tailored suite of pre-arrival settlement services.

If you want to learn more about the Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) project, please visit our website: www.coa-oce.ca.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to Louise Bélanger, Pindie Stephen, Lori Wilkinson, Wendy McCullough and Jennifer Hyndman for their kind support.

NOTES

[1] During the five years covered under the last Evaluation of Overseas Orientation Initiatives (Fiscal year 2005-06 to Fiscal year 2011-12), 94% of the 87,000 Canada-bound migrants that received pre-departure orientation before heading to Canada were trained through COA.

[2] In 2013, IOM implemented 55 resettlement, labour-market integration and family reunification orientation programs worldwide. Participating countries included Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, Germany, Israel, Japan, Norway, Thailand, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States and various other partners, including several Canadian provinces.

[3] For instance, COA normally operates in 8 to 10 refugee camps including: Dadaab (Kenya), Damak (Nepal), Dzaleka (Malawi), Emukulu (Eritrea), Kakuma (Kenya), Meheba (Zambia), Mayukwayukwa (Zambia) and Maratane (Mozambique).

[4] IOM has conducted needs assessments for the Karen and Bhutanese refugees and is preparing for similar assessments with Eritreans refugees in Sudan and Ethiopia.

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ORIENTATION CANADIENNE À L'ÉTRANGER : MAXIMISER LA PRÉPARATION PRÉ-DÉPART DES NOUVEAUX ARRIVANTS AU CANADA

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Composantes clés du secteur de l'établissement et de l'intégration, les initiatives d'orientation pré-départ visent à fournir aux réfugiés et aux immigrants l'information et les ressources nécessaires pour préparer leur (ré)établissement au Canada. Depuis sa création en 1951, l'Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM) développe et met en œuvre une foule de programmes d'orientation pré-départ. En partenariat avec le gouvernement du Canada, l'OIM offre le projet d'Orientation canadienne à l'étranger (OCÉ), une importante initiative d'orientation destinée aux réfugiés et aux immigrants sélectionnés. À travers des exemples tirés de l'expérience de l'OIM, cet article examine l'impact des services d'orientation pré-départ et les pratiques novatrices visant à maximiser la préparation pré-départ.

Chaque année, des dizaines de milliers de migrants prennent part à divers programmes d'orientation pré-départ dans le monde. L'orientation avant le départ peut prendre différentes formes (consultations individuelles ou en groupe ; en ligne ou en personne), cibler différentes clientèles (réfugiés ; immigrants temporaires et permanents ; étudiants internationaux) et être offerte via différents intervenants (pays de départ ; pays d'accueil ; universités ; employeurs ; etc.) Le présent article traite uniquement de la prestation de services d'orientation pré-départ, ou orientation culturelle, aux réfugiés et immigrants ayant été sélectionnés pour la résidence permanente canadienne.

Pionnière de la prestation de services d'orientation pré-départ pour les réfugiés et les immigrants, l'OIM identifie trois composantes essentielles à tout programme d'orientation pré-départ :

- Des données factuelles sur le pays d'accueil
- Des activities visant à développer les compétences pour réussir dans un nouveau contexte
- De l'information sur les attitudes nécessaires pour s'intégrer à sa communauté d'accueil (OIM, 2004)

Selon Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada (CIC), l'orientation pré-départ sert à fournir aux nouveaux arrivants les renseignements pertinents, exacts, cohérents et opportuns dont ils ont besoin pour prendre des décisions éclairées en matière d'établissement et accéder aux services dans ce domaine. Ils permettent également aux nouveaux arrivants d'acquérir une meilleure compréhension contextuelle de la vie au Canada, des lois canadiennes, des droits des citoyens canadiens et du système démocratique (CIC, 2011 et 2012).