MANITOBA'S EXPERIENCE WITH SETTLEMENT PROGRAMMING AND DELIVERY (1999-2013)

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Gérald Clement is a graduate of the University of Winnipeg with a BA in Administrative studies. In 2007, Gerry retired from the Manitoba Department of Labour and Immigration after serving thirty-two years in the federal and provincial public service. As Assistant Deputy Minister, from 1997 to 2007, Gerry led the Immigration Division of his Department through one of the most vibrant and exciting chapters of its provincial immigration and settlement history. In 2007, Gerry launched a private consulting practice (GLC Consulting) specializing in policy and program evaluation primarily in the immigration and settlement sector.

Robert Vineberg has a BA in History from the University of Toronto as well as an MA in Canadian History and a Graduate Diploma in Public Administration, both from Carleton University, in Ottawa. His career in the Canadian Federal Public Service spanned over 35 years, of which 28 were with the immigration program, serving abroad, in policy positions at national headquarters and, more recently, as Director General of Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Prairies and Northern Territories Region, based in Winnipeg. He now works as an historian and policy consultant.

In 2013 the Federal Government terminated agreements, signed in 1998 with British Columbia and Manitoba, transferring much of the authority for the design and delivery of settlement programs and services to the two Provinces. Drawing on material from interviews with key stakeholders in the immigration service system and a range of government documents and independent studies this article examines the Manitoba experience over this fourteen year period (1999-2013). The development, challenges and successes of the immigration and settlement program and the settlement services sector are documented for the period. Documenting the experience provides useful information to compare with CIC's delivery of settlement programs in other provinces. Going forward, the material also provides a good benchmark to compare with the new experience under greater Federal control of immigration policy and programs in the Province.

BACKGROUND

As part of a program review in the mid 90s the Federal Government offered greater responsibility to the provinces for the design and delivery of settlement services and programs. Only Manitoba and British Columbia eventually concluded agreements on what became known as "settlement realignment". A Settlement Annex to the 1996 Canada Manitoba Immigration Agreement (CMIA) was negotiated in 1997/98 and came into force on April 1st of the following year. A Provincial Nominee Agreement was negotiated concurrently and also became an annex to the umbrella agreement. Under these agreements Manitoba assumed responsibility for design and delivery of settlement services and also received authority to design and deliver a Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) which, it was hoped, would be better tailored to suit the immigration needs of the Province than was the Federal Skilled Workers Program. Subsequent changes in 2002/03 also provided more flexibility for financing administrative operations in support of the settlement program.

Notwithstanding the transfer, the Federal Government envisaged an "enduring federal role" that would include involvement in priority setting, encouragement of research on integration and a return to offering counselling to immigrants prior to their departure for Canada. In addition, the agreement required both Canada and Manitoba to abide by the principle that settlement and integration services across the country would be flexible, responsive and reasonably comparable.

In April 2012, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC), Jason Kenney, served notice to Manitoba and British Columbia that the Federal Government was cancelling the Settlement Realignment agreements with those two provinces. The Manitoba agreement was subject to one year's notice by either party and was terminated on April 1, 2013 while the BC agreement with a two year notice period expired on April 1, 2014. The Federal Government argued that immigrants need to have access to a more consistent level of services regardless of where they choose to settle in Canada. Thus, the Province lost control of the design and delivery of settlement services, although it continues to deliver the Provincial Nominee Program as do other provinces and territories.

RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION

Under the 1999 Agreement a total budget of $3,550,000 in settlement funding and $200,000 in associated administrative funding, including the salaries of 4 Full Time Equivalent positions, were transferred to Manitoba. By 2012-2013, funding had grown to over $36,000,000 and Manitoba settlement staff numbered about 25. The growth in funding was due both to a significant investment by the Government of Canada (roughly tripling the national settlement funding envelope over this period) and also to growth resulting from the federal allocation formula matching settlement funding to landing numbers in each province. As immigration to Manitoba increased dramatically, so did the settlement funding and the related funding for administration.

Manitoba had assured service providers that the transfer would be seamless and business would continue as usual. Changes came but they were incremental. Staff and service providers involved were generally reassured by the process and the messaging from both CIC and the Province.

Manitoba's *Growing through Immigration Strategy* combined with the integrated approach Manitoba took in linking PNP with settlement services and the positive results related to retention have been the major drivers of increased immigration to the province.

Manitoba also established legislated advisory bodies such as the Premier's Economic Advisory Council, the Manitoba Ethno-cultural Advisory and Advocacy Council and the Manitoba Immigration Council, with direct access to the Minister and the Premier to present advice and recommendations on immigration matters. This helped ensure immigration policy was not pursued in isolation from other socio-economic policy objectives.

OBSERVATIONS AND OUTCOMES

During realignment the number of immigrants and refugees arriving in the province increased by 328%, rising from 3,725 in 1999 to 15,962 in 2011, before falling slightly to 13,391 in 2012. In addition to increasing numbers, the diversity of arrivals has increased: a growing number of nationalities and ethnic groups, increasing language diversity and differences in language capacity, a wider range of income groups, increasing cultural diversity, life styles and living preferences. Numbers alone placed significant pressure on the settlement services system but in addition to numbers the increasing diversity of arrivals created new service needs and challenges.

Manitoba also worked to achieve a better regional distribution of immigrants within the Province. Attracting labour and investment through immigration to grow regional centres has been a major policy objective of the Manitoba Government. The figures suggest this objective has been successful, albeit more in some Manitoba regions than others. The number of people settling outside Winnipeg increased rapidly from less than 1,000 in the 1999 to 2002 period to 3,610 in 2009, before falling slightly to 3,546 in 2010, but then dropping to 2,564 in 2011 and 2,288 in 2012. The proportion settling outside of Winnipeg was close to 30% in some years and averaged approximately 23% over the period.

THE SETTLEMENT SERVICES EXPERIENCE

The challenges for service delivery were obvious: rapidly increasing numbers of arrivals settling in an increasing number of centres scattered over a wide geographic area. Many of the centres also contained relatively few immigrants, making delivery of services difficult and costly.

Manitoba's Integrated Service Model (see diagram), however, received high praise from most major stakeholders. The Model included pre-arrival information, centralized registration and referrals, centralized orientation, employment and language assessment, integration services (help with housing, education, health services and other integration supports), employment services (career and employment planning, qualifications recognition, job search, preparation and matching) and adult EAL services (for settlement, employment and academic purposes).

A strong emphasis was placed on a program development approach to language training, involving not only identifying program gaps but also developing solutions in-house, rather than issuing a call for proposals from service providers. Language training also actively supported the professional development of EAL teachers in Manitoba.

Manitoba implemented a settlement system that was, in general, flexible and responsive. Its single window registration and referral service (START), its initial orientation program (ENTRY), its centralized language assessment (WELARC) and the quality of EAL teaching are best practices that ought to be retained and may serve as models for introduction in other major centres. These major new services (ENTRY, START and WELARC) were established through strategic procurement processes unique to these three agencies in order to ensure the rapid roll out of these services.

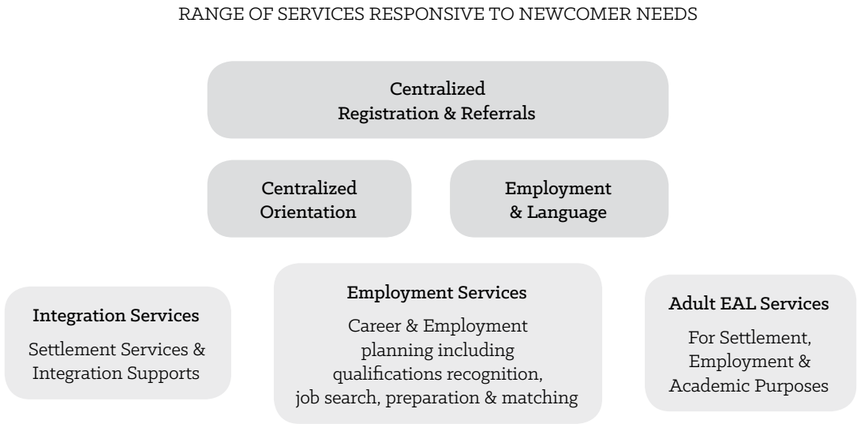
Although, Manitoba was not able to provide all of these services outside Winnipeg, centralized regional hubs, in coordination with Employment Manitoba, were implemented to provide comparable services in rural areas where a significant number of newcomers reside (i.e. Morden-Winkler, Steinbach, Neepawa and Brandon).

A *Fair Registration Practises in Regulated Professions Act*, was passed by the Province and provided for a Fairness Commissioner, as well as provincial investments in bridging programs and specialized language training to work towards better recognition of foreign qualifications. This is regarded as an excellent initiative and although much more remains to be done nationally to ensure that the talents of newcomers are not squandered, Manitoba's initiatives are excellent options for all jurisdictions to consider.

Manitoba was also active in monitoring program outcomes using the following sources:

- the information it received through agency monitoring and outcomes reports;
- direct client feedback from newcomers who participated in focus groups and interviews on the topic of settlement services;
- interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders such as employers, business representatives and municipal officials; and,
- periodic third party evaluations on specific target groups critical in making key program modifications or additions.

FIGURE 1: MANITOBA INTEGRATED SERVICE MODEL



Source: Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism

Program assessments and outcomes were continuously being fed into new program design and delivery methods.

The vast majority of users of settlement services were satisfied with their experience. Manitoba Immigration met regularly with the service providing community and, in general, the settlement and EAL sectors were highly appreciative and supportive of the provincial administration of services although some respondents felt that there was still room for improvement and that more opportunities could have been provided for the settlement service sector to work with those in other provinces and to share best practices. Similarly, some respondents felt the approach was too provincially driven to really allow service providers to build capacity internally and develop a settlement service sector with its own capacity.

Other stakeholders such as municipalities, businesses and major employers also expressed a high level of satisfaction with immigration in the Province and the settlement service sector in general. The pro-active immigration stance of the Province, the success of the PNP and the willingness of the Province and the Settlement Service Sector in general to work with business and community was appreciated by those trying to grow a business or centre. The responsiveness to labour force needs under the PNP was particularly appreciated by those businesses that were too small to undertake their own international recruitment. Some working in the Service Sector, however, felt that business came to rely too much on provincial initiative to recruit and train their labour force.

LOOKING FORWARD

The return to management of settlement services directly by CIC resulted in mixed feelings among stakeholders in Manitoba. There was cautious optimism that CIC will maintain the high level of service provided by the Province but also a number of concerns. There was a general concern expressed that imposition of a "national" system by CIC may reduce flexibility and, therefore, the ability of settlement agencies to respond to the needs of immigrants to Manitoba. Stakeholders hope that CIC will develop a better local knowledge base and provide authority to Manitoba-based CIC managers and Service Sector Agencies to respond innovatively to evolving settlement needs.

Most respondents also felt that new initiatives should strengthen and build on the key qualities of the Manitoba model that focused on coordination, consultation and collaboration. Manitoba had an established and proven system of coordinating mechanisms and, going forward, agencies expressed a desire to strengthen what works in the Province and not necessarily transplant a national strategy. There was also concern that CIC's funding model does not allow for services to be provided to non-permanent residents and, therefore, services to this group, previously provided by Manitoba would end, leaving a serious gap in settlement services unless alternative funding sources could be found.

Similarly, to increase the settlement sector's input in this new process, the Manitoba Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Sector Association (MIRSSA) and other sector representatives may need to be strengthened to represent, more effectively, the voices of the service providing community. The establishment of Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), first in Greater Winnipeg and, later, in other parts of the province, would serve to develop capacity to provide governments with coordinated policy input.

Most respondents felt that CIC and Manitoba need to ensure continuing Federal-Provincial cooperation and a number suggested that the two levels of government consider some form of co-management arrangement so that settlement clients in Manitoba can continue to benefit from quality settlement programming based on the expertise and investments at both levels of government.

CONCLUSIONS

The fourteen year experiment of settlement planning and delivery by the Province of Manitoba was considered a success by service providers, newcomers, business, community and other stakeholders in immigration. The range and quality of service increased dramatically over this period, making Manitoba a model of innovation in settlement services. The significant rise in immigrant arrivals, the better regional distribution of immigrants and the success in addressing labour force needs are further proof of success of the Manitoba Service Model and the PNP.

The model worked very well in Manitoba due to the unique factors in the Province such as its geographic size and the rapid increase in immigration from a very low level to a very high level relative to the provincial population, a general consensus in the Province in favour of immigration and successive governments committed to an interventionist immigration and settlement policy. This does not mean that all of Manitoba's initiatives can necessarily be adopted successfully in all other provinces.

During the same period, of course, services delivered by CIC in other provinces also improved. There are lessons to be learned from the Manitoba experience that could profitably be applied in other provinces, just as some of CIC's initiatives elsewhere could be incorporated into CIC's delivery of settlement services in Manitoba.

REFERENCE

This paper is based on a *Case Study: The Realigned System of Settlement Service Delivery in Manitoba, 1999-2013*, that the authors prepared for Immigration Research West (formerly the Western Consortium on Integration, Citizenship and Cohesion) which had, in turn, contracted with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to prepare the case study. Original references can be found in the Case Study.

L'ÉLABORATION ET LA PRESTATION DES SERVICES D'ÉTABLISSEMENT AU MANITOBA (1999-2013)

Tom Carter a récemment pris sa retraite de l'Université de Winnipeg où il a été professeur de géographie. Il a aussi récemment terminé son mandat en tant que titulaire de la chaire de recherche du Canada en évolution et adaptation urbaine. Il continue de mener des recherches en tant que chercheur principal au département de géographie et en tant que président de la Carter Research Associates inc. Il participe également de façon active à la recherche et à l'évaluation des programmes liés à réduction de la pauvreté et aux enjeux liés aux politiques sociales concernant les Autochtones et certaines autres populations marginalisées.

Gérald Clement est diplômé de l'Université de Winnipeg ; il détient un B.A. en études administratives. En 2007, Gerry a pris sa retraite ; il a quitté le ministère du Travail et de l'Immigration où il avait passé trente-deux ans dans la fonction publique fédérale et provinciale. En tant que sous-ministre adjoint, de 1997 à 2007, Gerry était responsable de la Section de l'immigration de son ministère pendant une des périodes les plus intéressantes de l'histoire de l'immigration et de l'établissement de la province. En 2007, Gerry a lancé son entreprise de consultation privée (GLC Consulting), une entreprise qui se spécialise dans l'évaluation des politiques et des programmes liés principalement au secteur de l'immigration et de l'établissement.

Robert Vineberg détient un baccalauréat en histoire de l'Université de Toronto ainsi qu'une maîtrise en histoire du Canada et un diplôme d'études supérieures en administration publique, tous deux de l'Université Carleton, à Ottawa. Il a travaillé auprès de la fonction publique fédérale pendant plus de 35 ans ; il a passé 28 années de ces années auprès du programme d'immigration, occupant un poste à l'étranger en tant que de responsables des politiques dans des bureaux nationaux et, plus récemment, en tant directeur général de Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada pour la région des praires et des territoires du Nord, basé à Winnipeg. Il travaille maintenant en tant qu'historien et consultant en matière de politiques.

En 2013, le gouvernement fédéral a mis un terme à des ententes qui avaient été signées en 1998 avec la Colombie-Britannique et le Manitoba, transférant ainsi une grande partie de la responsabilité de la conception et de la prestation des programmes et des services d'établissement aux deux provinces. En nous basant sur des informations recueillies par des entrevues avec des intervenants clés du système de services à l'immigration et sur une gamme de documents gouvernementaux et d'études indépendantes, cet article examine l'expérience du Manitoba au cours de cette période de 14 ans (1999-2013). La conception, les défis et les réussites du programme d'immigration et d'établissement et du secteur de services en l'établissement ont été documentés pour cette période. En recueillant des données sur cette expérience nous procure des informations utiles nous permettant de comparer les programmes d'établissement mis en place par CIC dans d'autres provinces. Ces données vont également nous offrir un bon point de référence nous permettant de faire des comparaisons avec la situation actuelle où le gouvernement fédéral a repris un plus grand contrôle sur les programmes et les politiques d'immigration dans cette province.