

OCASI

When Services Are Not Enough:

The Role of Immigrant and Newcomer Service Organizations in Fostering Community Leadership Development

A Report Prepared for
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
(OCASI)

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... 3

INTRODUCTION..... 6

METHODOLOGY..... 8

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES..... 8

RESEARCH COMPONENTS..... 8

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS..... 10

LITERATURE REVIEW..... 12

BACKGROUND: COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATION IN CANADA’S IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES..... 13

THEMES IN THE LITERATURE..... 14

ENABLERS OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATION..... 16

CHALLENGES TO COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATION..... 17

DEFINING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP..... 19

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP..... 19

RESEARCH FINDINGS..... 21

Enablers of Community Leadership Participation..... 21

Challenges to Community Leadership Participation..... 25

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS..... 36

Themes..... 36

Service Providers are Community Leaders..... 39

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 42

RECOMMENDATIONS..... 42

AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH..... 44

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 45

APPENDIX 1: WHEN SERVICES ARE NOT ENOUGH INTERVIEW FORM..... 50

APPENDIX 2: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS..... 52

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FUNDERS..... 53

APPENDIX 4: EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP..... 54

Executive Summary

This paper was funded by the United Way of Greater Toronto in order to gain a better understanding of what community leadership participation is, how it manifests itself in society, and to explore and document the role of immigrant service organizations in promoting community leadership development that fosters participation and inclusion at different sites of civil society.

Using existing literature, experiences and feedback from service organizations, individuals, community leaders, funders and multilevel stakeholders, this paper illustrates the existence of gaps in the understanding of what community leadership is, how it is currently supported, and how it should be supported in order to achieve the goal of creating a more equitable society where immigrants can achieve full and equal participation in the social, political, economic and cultural dimensions of society.

What emerges is a greater contextual understanding of how different ethno-racial, immigrant and refugee groups perceive community leadership based on both external and internal community factors. These, in turn, act as enablers of and challenges to community leadership participation and provide some insight into the conditions required to foster community leadership in a diverse society.

Data demonstrates that factors such as socio-economic status, culture, political histories, period of migration, longevity and patterns of settlement in Canada, religious beliefs, levels of community cohesion, and familiarity with systems play a significant role in informing the development of effective strategies to support community leadership. This paper also suggests how immigrant and refugee service organizations are addressing the gap between the reality of *effective* community leadership development practices and *funded* community leadership development practices in the sector.

Combining a review of existing literature, focus group, survey and key informant interview data, what becomes clear is that there is no standard definition of community leadership. Within multiple understandings of what constitutes community leadership, the most prevalent definition offered by key informants is the work of immigrant and newcomer service provider organizations in the sector is the primary vehicle and site of community engagement, mobilization, advocacy, service provision, support and community action.

Based on research findings, the following seven recommendations were made:

Recommendation 1: There is no recognition of the differences in how leadership is understood and exercised in a diverse society.

➔ ***The sector as a whole must acknowledge this fact and respond by introducing new language, mechanisms and supports to recognize diversity within communities and effectively build the capacity of the service sector to engage them.***

Recommendation 2: Immigrant and newcomer service provider organizations are community leaders and are more than organizations that deliver services to their target populations; they are spaces and places where communities receive the tools they require to empower themselves, they are agents of social change and a location where participation is valued, recognized and encouraged as sites of social organization and mobilization.

→ ***There must be recognition that such organizations are more than service providers. This must begin with a change in language that names such organizations as more than a vehicle for delivering services as currently implied in a producer- consumer relationship. In order for this to be realized, such organizations must be supported in the work that they do that is not simply settlement service related or service provision related. There must be support for innovation in program development and delivery, advocacy, community organizing and initiatives that address the needs of communities as articulated by the communities themselves.***

Recommendation 3: There is no single standard model that will effectively support community leadership development in a diverse society.

→ ***This must be recognized and accordingly, changes made to funding to support flexibility in programs, services and activities that are funded to build community capacity and leadership development***

Recommendation 4: Many newer service provider organizations serving new and emerging communities continue to struggle with challenges of capacity due to lack of core and program funding.

→ ***This must be recognized and accordingly, support for such service provider organizations prioritized in municipal, provincial and federal funding policies and practices.***

Recommendation 5: There is a disconnect between what is funded and what is effective in meeting the goals of community leadership development.

→ ***Service provider organizations must be empowered and consulted to gain and share information on what is effective in particular communities in order to develop mechanisms for supporting effective and not necessarily best practices.***

Recommendation 6: Settlement is not a time-bound phenomenon, but is a longer-term process that involves the creation of new social infrastructures for society as a whole.

→ ***Service provider organizations must be given meaningful opportunities to determine the nature and scope of settlement services in order to effectively meet the needs of their communities. As such, service provider organizations must be included at decision-making tables where policy, programming and structural change decisions are made at the municipal, provincial and federal levels.***

Recommendation 7: Research shows that there are conditions that best foster community leadership. A combination of specific tools, capacity-building activities and policy directions must be employed to provide the supports necessary for those communities that have not achieved visible community leadership in all segments of society in order to advance a social equity agenda.

➔ ***Policymakers, funding bodies and the community and settlement service sector must engage in proactive policy development to ensure that equity is integrated into all areas of our society to enable broader participation of traditionally marginalized communities.***

Based on research findings, these are the areas for future research

- Explore the relationship between capacity building, community development, social inclusion, social capital and community leadership development.
- Explore the role of immigrant and newcomer networks, associations and coalitions in building community leadership capacity.
- Identify effective approaches for support and leadership participation among low-income newcomer and immigrant women.
- Explore the landscape of settlement priorities with a focus on new and emerging communities, especially in the areas of current levels of support, types of supports and how to meet the needs of such communities.
- Examine the relevance of the current immigrant settlement service model vis-a-vis a changing and diverse immigrant and newcomer population.

Introduction

“The types of innovation we see in Canada are changing us as much as the society we hope to change, because our reality is also changing, and this is mutually reinforcing....”

- Key Informant

This paper was funded by the United Way of Greater Toronto in order to gain a better understanding of what community leadership participation is, how it manifests itself in society, and to explore and document the role of immigrant service organizations in promoting community leadership development that fosters participation and inclusion at different sites of civil society.

Based on the research findings, recommendations have been made on what areas future research should address, and what policy directions can be enhanced to advance the participation of immigrant and newcomer communities in Toronto.

In the year 2001, 18.4% of this country’s population comprised of immigrants who were born outside Canada (Statistics Canada, 2003). Ontario is the most ethno-racially diverse province in Canada where immigration and settlement levels have created a rich social fabric that embodies a wide range of skills, expertise, cultural norms, practices, histories and beliefs. Although Ontario has seen the settlement of a number of diverse ethno-racial communities over a period of time, not all communities have equally benefited from their Canadian experience. This can be seen most explicitly in Toronto, where over the last 30 years, “migration... has been globalized” (Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997, 103) and where, in the year 2001, immigrants made up 44% of the population in Toronto’s Census Metropolitan Area (Statistics Canada, 2003). Issues such as un/underemployment, social exclusion and multiple systemic barriers are ongoing themes in the immigrant and refugee serving sector that impede the participation of immigrants in broader society. Research has shown that the strength and degree of the existence of community leadership within these groups is also a key factor in determining the levels of participation of particular communities in the broader social, economic, cultural and political context that is Canadian society.

This paper, using existing literature, experiences and feedback from service organizations, individuals, community leaders, funders and multilevel stakeholders, illustrates the existence of gaps in the understanding of what community leadership is, how it is currently supported, and how it should be supported in order to achieve the goal of creating a more equitable society where immigrants can achieve full and equal participation in the social, political, economic and cultural dimensions of society. The data shows a multiplicity of factors that impact on community leadership participation, and sheds light on how it is understood and under what conditions community leadership is able to flourish.

What has also emerged is a greater contextual understanding of how different ethno-racial, immigrants and refugee groups perceive community leadership based on both external and internal community factors. Factors include socio-economic status, culture, political histories, period of migration, longevity and patterns of settlement in Canada, religious beliefs, and levels of community cohesion. This helps to better understand what strategies are effective in supporting community leadership development in diverse communities, why they are effective, and how immigrant and

refugee service organizations are addressing the gap between the reality of *effective* community leadership development practices and *funded* community leadership development practices in the sector.

Ultimately what becomes evident is the need for recognition of flexibility and innovation in identifying and defining what constitutes leadership, creating and supporting mechanisms for fostering community leadership participation, financial support for these initiatives and clear policy directions that will address systemic gaps. There is no cookie-cutter model or approach that can be applied to all communities in the same way, and the role of immigrant and refugee service organizations becomes most fundamental in providing a venue for community members to come together, receive the supports they need, learn about systems and structures and find a voice in democratic society. Basic settlement services act as an enabler to facilitating participation, after which individuals are better able to identify like-minded individuals, and collectively address issues for social change. On the other hand governments, funders and mainstream social institutions and organizations must recognize that immigrant service providers are venues and promoters of community leadership and that their social value extends beyond the provision of settlement services.

“The ultimate outcome [of effective community leadership participation] is creating consonance between the activities we conduct and the expectation of community outcomes. Innovation, social change, empowerment: all of these things need to happen for a continuum to exist. If there is simply empowerment without any social change, or no articulation of issues, this process has no effect”.

-Key Informant

Methodology

Information provided in this report is based on a combination of a literature review and participatory research including focus groups, a membership survey, and key informant interviews.

Research Objectives

- To identify and document the role of organizations in the immigrant and refugee service sector in community leadership development;
- To identify community-based programs and activities that bring people together in public places in the community, between private lives and social structures, be they communal or large-scale institutions within OCASI's Toronto member agencies;
- To identify factors that enhance/impede the ability of communities to engage in community leadership activities;
- To identify how policy can strengthen and support the development of community leadership to advance the ways in which immigrants can achieve full and equitable participation in the social, political, economic and cultural dimensions of society.

Research Components

Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review was to define community leadership participation, review community leadership trends in Canada, and to identify and provide examples of factors that influence leadership participation in immigrant communities.

OCASI Member Agency Survey Tool

A survey was sent to 50 organizations serving immigrants in Metro Toronto. Data from 12 completed surveys was utilized in this research.

Focus Groups

In total, 5 focus groups were held between October 2003 and November 2004. The first focus group was held at the OCASI Professional Development Conference at the Geneva Park Conference Centre in October 2003, where consultations took place with representatives of immigrant and refugee service organizations. The second focus group took place on April 2, 2004 with OCASI Board members. The third focus group was held on April 15, 2004 with OCASI members from Toronto. The last two focus groups took place on November 15th and November 17th, 2004 respectively at OCASI with member agency representatives.

Key Informant Interviews

Interviews were held either in person or by telephone with individuals, agency representatives, front-line workers and multilevel stakeholders. Key informants included staff working in immigrant and newcomer service provider organizations, individuals from multiple ethno-racial communities, and funders of settlement/community services.

Terms and Definitions

Newcomer and Immigrant

For the purpose of this paper, based on feedback through the consultation process, the terms “immigrant” and “newcomer” do not refer to a particular timeline of migration, or period of settlement in Canada. The term “newcomer” denotes broader membership than simply “immigrant”, including individuals and/or communities comprising convention refugees (those who have protection and legal resident status in Canada according to the Geneva Convention on refugees), those claiming refugee status and those who may not have formal status in Canada, but who reside in the City of Toronto. “Immigrant communities” are referred to as the geographic, social and linguistic enclaves newcomers have traditionally created for themselves. A variety of factors including ethnicity, culture, shared memory, length of time in Canada, shared political histories and deep-rooted values underlie the complexities of such communities and the roles they play in supporting new immigrants in adapting and settling in a new land. Immigrant communities are also the location in which networks are established, supports become available and an understanding of the values and habits of the host country are best understood and communicated in the absence of family and friends.

Community

Multiple definitions of “community” exist. For the purpose of this paper, the term “community” refers to a self-defined group that has come together on the basis of issues or concerns common to them, or a group that has been institutionally defined by a system, and as such, is recognized as having an identity associated with a broader ethno-cultural or ethno-racial community. This applies, for example, to members of ethno-racial communities who are defined by mainstream society as belonging to a particular ethno-racial umbrella group, such as “South Asians”, or “Asians”. The particularity and diversity within these communities is explored as it becomes relevant in assessing the overall causes for active participation or lack of participation in civic society.

It must be noted that within these understandings of ‘community’, there is a gap in existing literature with regard to gender issues within immigrant and newcomer communities. Immigrant and newcomer women are a community that has traditionally experienced neglect by researchers and policy makers due to their submersion into broader ethno-racial/ethno-cultural communities. Thus, the particular concerns of women are left largely unaddressed and unarticulated in the exploration of community leadership participation.

Immigrant and newcomer service providers

Immigrant and newcomer service providers are community-based organizations that receive funding from a variety of both public and private sector sources to provide services that facilitate the settlement and adjustment of immigrants and refugees, as well as other related services. Some organizations are ethno-specific; others include multi-service agencies and community centers. Associations, networks and more informal grassroots groups may also provide services, without obtaining financial support for their work, and are not included in this discussion of service providers.

These broad definitions of terminology that emerged in focus group discussions and interviews help provide a conceptual frame for examining the complexities of newcomer settlement, the differences in experiences and unique needs of diverse ethno-racial immigrant communities in developing and exercising leadership.

Dominant definitions of community leadership and participation focus on participation in political parties or community groups. (YWCA of Australia, 2004) For immigrant and newcomer communities, there are a number of factors that impact on their ability to participate in the political life of a host country. The following literature review will explore some of these factors and establish a context for the research findings of this project.

Literature Review

This review explores some of the academic, scholarly and community-based literature on community leadership participation, with an emphasis on the content of a variety of reports, studies and articles relating to the experience of Canada's, and predominantly Toronto's immigrant communities.

Community leadership participation broadly describes activities that bring members of a community together and support the development of skills, connections and other tools needed to voluntarily and effectively participate in the decision-making processes of civil society. Community-level participation can be seen as one of two separate but related ways through which people aim to bring about social change, the second being formal electoral participation (Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2003).

Leadership is a dynamic process of engagement that reflects existing societal conditions. It takes on many forms, some of which (e.g. collective, multigenerational) are only beginning to be recognized and defined by mainstream society (Asian Pacific American Women's Leadership Institute, 2001; Marsh et al., 2003). Community leadership can be individual or group, paid or volunteer, can take many forms and occurs in a wide variety of situations and settings such as in faith-based institutions, labour unions, parent councils, cultural institutions, the family (which has recognition as the core institution for transmission of values, standards and stability in many cultures) and in the political arena. An important contributor to civic engagement, it is considered by many to be essential for the functioning and stability of democratic society (Putnam, 1994).

Community leadership is often described as a defensive response to a lack of trust that formal power structures will address concerns (Born, 2004; Lewis, 1994). The importance of strong individual leaders, sometimes called social entrepreneurs, who foster solidarity and trust, is frequently cited (Botsman & Latham in Andersen et al., 2001; Leadership Vancouver, 1998; Schorr, 1997 as quoted in Born, 2004), as is the importance of collaboration within and between communities (Budhu, 2001). The relationship of identity to leadership is another prominent theme, particularly salient for immigrant communities (Jedwab, 2001; Saloojee, 2003; City of Toronto, 1998; Siemiatycki et al., 2001). Community leadership is often portrayed as something that people can be taught and Shore (1999) describes it as a process through which ordinary people make use of skills that they possess but take for granted (Schorr 1997 as quoted in Born, 2004).

The literature reflects an overlap between community leadership, community capacity-building, community development, social capital and social inclusion (Saloojee, 2003; Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2001; Jedwab, 2001; Institute on Governance, 2001).

Background: Community leadership participation in Canada's immigrant communities

Historically, immigrant community leadership was characterized by strong links to religious institutions and a focus on settlement assistance through related volunteer organizations such as benevolent societies, immigrant aid societies and mutual benefit societies (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2002; Siemiatycki et al., 2001). Community leadership also emerged through the activities of trade unions and (often related) political organizations such as Toronto's largely Jewish garment industry workforce, Black Railway Porters, and Italian construction workers in the 1960s. In some communities, such as Jewish and Italian, community leadership progressed to the realms of business and/or professions, became highly institutionalized and contributed to rising social mobility. In others, for example in the Black community, it did not). (Siemiatycki et al 2001) Possible reasons for this are explored below.

Since the 1960's, organized religion has declined and community leadership shifted to more secular organizations, often ethno-cultural institutions focused on community development and service delivery. These institutions received significant government financial support, in large part due to Canada's multiculturalism policy of the 1970s and 1980s (Lupul, 1982). The 1990s saw cutbacks and changes in government funding from program to project-based criteria, a shift away from infrastructure support or core funding that negatively impacted many organizations, now increasingly having to provide services and leadership against great odds (Budhu, 2001; Siemiatycki et al., 2001; Scott, 2003). The growing suburbanization of immigrant communities has compounded the effects of this shift (Siemiatycki et al., 2001).

Government support has had a number of lasting effects on community leadership participation. The first is that the majority of community-based immigrant organizations operate with democratic principles, a requirement of receiving charitable status (Institute on Governance, 2001). The second is a preponderance of immigrant organizations focused on providing services. Organizations funded to deliver services are not as well equipped to participate in the decision-making realm due to lack of resources, connections, visibility, credibility and other resources (Marsh et al., 2003).

A segment of the literature on community leadership is devoted to political participation. Limited Canadian data exists on immigrant community participation in electoral politics, though research indicates that overall political participation by newcomers is low in immigrant-receiving countries (Siemiatycki and Saloojee 2001, 2003). Junn (1999) found that members of historically disadvantaged communities are more likely to be involved in protest than vote, an alternative way to be politically engaged. The number of ethnic organizations present may be related to the degree of formal political participation (Fenema and Tillie, 2001). Communities with political representation are generally wealthier, well connected and highly educated. An exception is Toronto's Italian community which in 1999/2000 made up 6% of the population yet held 20% of city council, 13.6% of provincial legislature and 22.7% federal parliament seats – this success is attributed to a unique combination of factors that include the size of the community, multiple generations in the city and an extremely high rate of home ownership – a key predictor of voter turnout.

Themes in the literature

A variety of themes appear in the literature that relate to the nature and extent of civic participation by immigrant communities. The following is a discussion of these themes broken down into broad, inter-related categories:

Resources: According to Jedwab (2001) the importance of resources to leadership can be overshadowed by factors such as the level of confidence vested in the leaders by their communities. While this can be true, the reality for most communities is that without a solid resource base, effective leadership and civic participation can be difficult. Community size is important, particularly in the early stages of a community's development (Institute on Governance, 2001). Small communities generally have fewer resources to build and maintain their own infrastructures and many lack the financial base from which to raise resources. Toronto's most economically disadvantaged communities include those of African, Afghani, Iranian, Vietnamese, Sri Lankan and Tamil descent, a list that includes communities whose leadership structures and activities are not well established and are less integrated with other groups (Dilmaghani, 1999; Pfeifer, 1999; Ornstein, 2000).

Cohesion: Great diversity, and sometimes tension, exists within immigrant groups based on country of origin, time of immigration, religion, political belief, ethnic origin, race and other factors. Differentiation, by economic/class disparity in particular, impacts on community governance (Jedwab, 2001). National origin and social class are factors in the development of Toronto's heterogeneous Caribbean communities which are characterized by a lack of internal cohesion and institutional fragmentation (Siemiatycki et al., 2001). Toronto's Iranian community has related its lack of cohesion and internal fragmentation to internal and external community leadership participation (Dilmaghani, 1999). Lack of cohesion has many causes. Combinations of multiple factors can synergistically interact. In Toronto's Vietnamese community for example, region of origin and socioeconomic status strongly interact. People originating from North Vietnam are under-represented among the membership and leadership of the community's organizations, in part due to a commonly held perception by South Vietnamese community members that the North Vietnamese are generally of a lower income and educational background (Pfeifer, 1999).

Geography: Geographic proximity may be more relevant to communities in the early stages of their development and becomes less so as they mature (Institute on Governance, 2001). Much of the literature reflects an ecological view of community development in which geographic proximity is crucial for development and maintenance of a strong and vital ethnic group culture and leadership (Pfeifer, 1999; Massey, 1985). Marsh identifies "place" as a key factor in leadership participation, in large part because it anchors leadership to constituency (Marsh et al., 2003). Others argue that some communities develop based on factors such as communication, interaction and shared activities that may not be evident to those outside of that community (Agocs, 1981; Goldenberg and Haines, 1992).

Constituency: Leadership relies on constituency to provide legitimacy, support and a body for accountability. How strong and organized a constituency is affects leadership participation and must be addressed by leaders (Marsh et al., 2003, Thomas and Jackson, 2002). The role of constituency leadership is also not well researched. Constituencies are often underutilized, not prepared to take on advocacy roles and not well connected to people that could help their cause (Marsh et al., 2003). As globalization, technology and other factors contribute to unprecedented levels of information and

individual choice with respect to what organizations to belong to, services to use and so on the importance of defining, reaching out to, cultivating and accommodating constituency grows. This aspect of community leadership is however, rarely examined. Community leaders are often considered to represent the entire community, though they may represent only elements of that community. (Jedwab 2001) Research also suggests that priorities, goals and ideology vary among representatives of a given community in different leadership spheres (Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2001; Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2003).

Settlement and integration history and characteristics: How long a community has been in Canada, level of language proficiency, knowledge of the political system and a sense of being rooted in Canada are factors in community leadership participation, while how and to what extent this occurs varies by community (Jedwab, 2001; Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2003). In the early stages of a community's development, community members' attachment to country of origin can mobilize community leadership, an effect that can persist in communities from countries facing political challenges but fade in others (Jedwab, 2001). The importance of language also varies across communities (Institute on Governance, 2001). Community maturity can mean more familiarity and participation in Canada's political system and an increase in that form of community leadership participation. Toronto's Iranian community, for example, is relatively new in terms of its development and demonstrates a link between education about Canadian political structures and systems, institutional development and its community leadership development (Dilmaghani, 1999).

Factors that influence identity: Identity is intertwined with community leadership participation, as well as with constituency. Gender, age, religious affiliation and region of origin are among the factors highlighted in the literature. Identity can be related to region of origin, with pre-existing factions / rivalries brought from country of origin and sometimes given institutional or other forms of expression (Jedwab, 2001). Immigrant women have always been active leaders whose spheres of activity evolved from the family and issues of employment, special services and racism to today's broader leadership participation (Budhu, 2001; Canadian Council on Social Development, 2001; Siemiatycki et al., 2001). Women appear to have more participatory and relationship oriented leadership styles than men, although research on this is limited (Hudson and Williamson, 2002; Marsh et al., 2003). With the exception of East and Southeast Asians visible minority groups have young age profiles. Often facing a responsive older generation, immigrant youth can also lack access to programs and activities that foster leadership capacity, provide role models and positive space in which to congregate (Dilmaghani, 1999; Budhu 2001). Religion often influences social structure and institutional development, as in the Vietnamese community, which is strongly organized along religious lines (Pfeiffer, 1999). It may, as among Canada's South Asians, be intertwined with ethnicity and can provide a source of community leaders, as in Canada's Arab communities. In some groups, such as the Jewish community, it is fundamental to identity (Jedwab, 2001; Siemiatycki, 2001).

Societal conditions and trends: Today's under-representation of racialized groups in high-paying jobs, sectors and higher rates of unemployment, poverty and marginalization have much to do with historical patterns of racial discrimination (Budhu, 2001). Such persistent discrimination leads to incomplete citizenship, undervalued participation, undervalued recognition and plays a critical role in social identity (Saloojee, 2003). Issues of employment equity, unemployment and underemployment cut across various immigrant communities as Canada's demand for above-average skilled and educated immigrants fails to translate into comparable employment and earnings (Budhu,

2001; Ornstein, 2000). Organizational changes in particular impact on community leadership participation. Canadian organizations have undergone dramatic changes in recent years, whether private, non-profit or public, such as the decentralization of services, labour and human resources outsourcing, high staff turnover and a general decline in available resources. Shifts in funding sources and frameworks can affect leaders and constituencies, particularly if dependency relationships with funders are at play (Jedwab, 2001).

Enablers of community leadership participation

Data suggests that there are many factors that can enable community leadership participation. Research has shown that access to stable sources of income and home ownership is a strong factor in determining levels of civic engagement (Budhu, 2001; Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2001). Adequate financial compensation for leaders is another factor that enables individuals to take on leadership roles (Marsh et al., 2003).

Common cause, and sometimes an outside threat, can lead to greater community mobilization and cohesion (Institute on Governance, 2001). This assists in exposing individuals to situations beyond their own immediate experience. Charismatic leaders who transcend boundaries of race, culture, ethnicity, class and gender also provide inspiration for individuals to participate as leaders in their own communities (Marsh et al., 2003). This can lead to alliances with others outside of an immediate community, which can lead to support and linkages between emerging leaders (Marsh 2003). Wider community mobilization can occur with the acknowledgement of shared values that somehow are rooted in communities and are a source of commonality. This can lead to the formation of sustainable alliances between communities with similar interests to share resources, ideas and best practices, increase public exposure and access people in power (Budhu, 2001; Siemiatycki et al., 2001; Institute on Governance, 2001).

The presence of well-established, cohesive immigrant and newcomer communities in other countries also acts as an enabler to community leadership participation (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2002; Jedwab, 2001). What also assists this process is community empowerment through a community's adoption of a proactive, and not reactive, approach to civic participation (Dilmaghani, 1999).

Education has been cited as the most important factor in assuming leadership roles in immigrant communities (see Breton in Jedwab, 2001). Other factors include reaching out to youth (Dilmaghani, 1999; Laidlaw Foundation, 1999), creating systemic mechanisms such as a national mechanism for visible minority communities to create a cohesive voice in the larger society (Budhu, 2001), and introducing holistic approaches to address economic marginalization, systemic racism and discrimination while teaching civic participation (Dilmaghani, 1999).

For service provider organizations, factors that support the work they do in fostering community leadership participation include resources such as core funding, support for advocacy and policy work at all levels, leadership development programs for immigrant communities that address diverse leadership approaches and involve communities in program design (Marsh et al., 2003).

Systemic enablers include diverse venues and formats for participation in decision-making consultations that result in rapid and real change, and municipalities with the will, resources and independence to develop policies and programs that are responsive to immigrant communities (Siemiatycki, 1998). Leadership development opportunities that are effective are those that are linked to real policy goals (Marsh et al., 2003; Jedwab in Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2003; Dilmaghani, 1999).

What becomes evident is the need for the promotion of inclusiveness in broader society in conjunction with the promotion of leadership in specific communities. This will lead to increased visibility of immigrant community leadership, and increased mutual support between community leaders (Marsh et al., 2003).

Some of these points are introduced in the research findings, although not necessarily in the same context as outlined in this section.

Challenges to community leadership participation

Factors that impact on the work of service provider organizations in fostering community leadership participation include cutbacks in *social spending and funding structures* where different communities are forced to compete with each other for funds, and in which immigrant communities are often dependent on structures of the society that has historically excluded them (Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2003).

Organizations in the settlement and community service sector, due to lack of resources, *experience difficulty in attracting and maintaining qualified staff*, as well as attracting young leaders. Resource constraints also lead to varying levels of access to information technology among communities, and limited resources to develop leadership transition and succession planning. (Budhu 2001)

The *dependence on the same particular individuals* who represent certain communities leads to participation fatigue. The lack of opportunity for others to participate or be represented often leads to low self esteem, both at the individual and community levels (Dilmaghani, 1999) and a sense of isolation, community pressure and overwork among the leaders who have gained access to decision-making tables (Marsh et al., 2003).

The *racialization of poverty, growing gap between rich and poor, systemic and structural racism, imbalanced portrayal of racialized communities in media* are all systemic barriers to community leadership development and participation (Budhu, 2001; Saloojee, 2003). This is compounded by the lack of opportunity and information for such communities to acquire the skills, experience, analysis and connections required to be at a policy table (Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2003). This, in turn, leads to the persistent exclusion of visible minority leaders in policy-making; when present visible minority leaders are often peripheral to the decision-making process (Budhu, 2001; Marsh et al., 2003).

Immigrant and newcomer group issues are deemed “special interest” versus mainstream, while there is a perception by decision-makers that immigrant leaders are mainly service providers and not decision-makers (Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2003).

Other factors that are barriers to community leadership participation include *limited language ability* (Dilmaghani, 1999) in English and/or French. There is also the issue of a *lack of community cohesion where divisions are based on region of origin, language, religion, class, political philosophy or other factors* (Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2001). Some argue that these same factors can also indicate a dynamic and functioning community (Dorais et al., 1987 in Pfeifer 1999; Breton in Pfeifer, 1999).

Participation of newcomer and immigrant communities in the political life of a host country is thwarted by *lack of political representation* and often, *limited experience with democratic civic and political participation*, such as among residents of the former Soviet Union and China (Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2001).

These factors represent both **systemic and individual challenges** to community leadership participation in immigrant and newcomer communities. Focus group, survey and key informant data include some of these points that respondents suggested as factors that impact on both the participation of, and leadership development in newcomer and immigrant communities.

Defining Community Leadership

Community Leadership

One of the themes that this research explored was how communities define the term “community leadership participation.” No respondents provided a definition for this term, but were able to define leadership. Those who responded to surveys agreed that it is “*community-based programs and activities that bring people together in public places in the community, between private lives and social structures, be they communal or large-scale institutions.*” They agreed that this is where “*leadership and empowerment, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation are fostered and developed through community development and civic engagement*”. (Lewis, 1994)

Thus, focus group, key informant and survey data suggests that there are multiple and interconnected definitions of leadership that are expressed at three different levels. These levels are *individual leadership*, *leadership within communities* and *leadership between and by communities*. What became clear is that the term community leadership is best understood as being the leadership that is rooted in, and emerges from, the work of service provider organizations.

Data suggests that *individual leadership* focuses on the vision of an individual and their ability to mobilize others on a shared and common interest. This focuses on the capacity and impact of the individual in advancing change in an area of interest to themselves and others. The majority of feedback from focus group participants spoke to leadership being focused on the vision of an individual and his/her ability to mobilize others, utilize the ideas of a group and effect change through collective action.

“Where division and ethnicity are markers of marginality, the goal of community leadership is to create a social environment that fosters change and innovation.”

- Key Informant

“Leadership takes having someone who has a vision and is willing to work towards making that vision happen. A good leader is able to combine other people’s ideas and help everyone come together and make vision a reality.”

Definitions such as this illustrate the interrelatedness of individual and group leadership qualities where there is an

understanding that a leader is able to bring out leadership qualities in others. This is able to occur as a result of trust relationships, commonality of interest and capacity to take action. According to the literature, *the role of individual leaders is often most important in new communities and diminishes as communities mature.*

Other definitions of leadership spoke to *leadership within communities* referring to a broader group capacity as well as the capabilities, expertise and skills of each member. In this context, many respondents defined community leadership in terms that assumed every individual has the capacity to be a leader. Each individual, it was suggested, has distinct leadership qualities, strengths and

expertise. Some definitions included “Having the legitimate access to put forth one’s ability to participate and give to the collective”; “community members contribute and participate in community development using their talents and skills...”; “know the problems and try to find solutions; everyone can be a leader”; “leadership is an art that any member of the community can possess, either at his/her own level or at the community s/he will try to consistently influence and direct others in such a way as to obtain their willing obedience, confidence, respect and loyal cooperation in the manner desired by the leader”. These definitions indirectly suggest that society has the responsibility of providing the conditions necessary to maximize the capacity of a collective or group to meaningfully participate in a democratic social and political framework and enable the creation of their own social and political voice.

Data suggests that ***community leadership is leadership between and by communities***, and is most recognized in the work of service provider organizations, which is one of the most appropriate locations for fostering community leadership participation. Respondents suggested that immigrant and newcomer service providers are broadly recognized as community leaders

at three levels: the individual level, program/service level and at the institutional/systems level. Many of the activities cited as fostering community leadership participation are also functions of community development and capacity building work. In this way, community development and capacity building become key tools in advancing the participation of communities and developing effective group leadership strategies. Focusing on the political life of many of these communities and the notion of empowerment, it becomes clear that the service provider organization is a free and democratic space that is conducive to building a community voice unlike any other space in society.

“Leadership takes having someone who has a vision and is willing to work towards making that vision happen. A good leader is able to combine other people’s ideas and help everyone come together and make vision a reality”

- Key Informant

Thus, data suggests that while leadership by itself is an individualistic notion, community leadership represents collective leadership rooted in an organization or institution. Data also suggests that **it is in service provider organizations that community leadership participation is best fostered and developed.**

Research Findings

Enablers of Community Leadership Participation

There are a variety of factors and conditions that enable the development of leadership capacity in communities. This section will explore some of these issues based on focus group, survey data and key informant interviews.

The factors that support community leadership participation can be divided into two categories: those impacting on the individual community member, and those impacting the systems of support, such as service provider agencies.

“Community leadership participation is the link between community organization leaders and the community- this link is optimized when the latter become the former...”
-Key Informant

1. Factors Enabling the Individual

Firstly, the factors affecting the individual both personally and in their community will be explored. Focus group and key informant data suggest that these broadly include: personal resources, settlement services, shared political histories, longevity of community in Canada, culture and language, religion and extent of knowledge of the system.

Personal resources

Personal resources refer to the individual or community's access to resources. This is based on their official immigration status in Canada, socio-economic status, education, class, employment status, access to support networks, and knowledge of systems or access to knowledge of systems. It was suggested that permanent residents who arrive in Canada as highly skilled and educated independent immigrants, who belong to a more established community in Canada (such as the Chinese or South Asian communities) are better able to negotiate the system, call on supports and develop leadership within their communities than, for example, the Continental African-Canadian community, which, although highly skilled and educated, is the newest to Canada and post-980s, comprises mainly of refugee communities from different countries. Those who have access to personal financial resources are also better able to overcome some of the initial challenges of the settlement process while looking for work and housing.

Access to settlement services

One consistent theme that is fairly obvious and was discussed in great depth is the importance of having settlement needs addressed. Without basic life needs such as housing, employment and language acquisition, it was suggested that leadership development is less of a priority in the life of an immigrant or newcomer. However, this theme was also discussed with recognition that settlement services alone will not foster community leadership development, but rather must be a precondition for the growth of leadership in immigrant and newcomer communities. In this way, some key informants suggested that the

provision of settlement services do not necessarily enable the development of community leadership participation, but rather enable the basic settlement of communities, after which community leadership participation can be encouraged and fostered.

Shared political histories

Data suggests that multiple ethno-racial communities that have common historical experiences of oppression (such as newcomers from colonized countries) may collectively mobilize and work together more so than communities which do not have shared political histories. It was also suggested that some political divisions along national lines that newcomers initially bring with them can be eliminated over time in Canada due to the need to work together and mobilize within a unified voice. Some key informants spoke of internal community issues that act to impede the cohesion of communities, but it was recognized that the longer a community resides in Canada, the more such political positions that originate from a home country are dismissed.

Longevity of community in Canada

Respondents articulated the point that some communities that have resided in Canada over a longer period of time have been able to establish an economic base, create a network of community support, establish services and avail themselves of both internal community and external resources. Community media, small private sector businesses and knowledge of systems and how they work all assist immigrants and newcomers in accessing support structures within their communities upon arrival. It is for this reason that some communities are better equipped to support newcomers than others. It was suggested that the Italian and Chinese communities in particular, are examples of more established communities in Canada.

Culture and language

Focus group and interview responses suggest that familiarity with language and culture can, in some cases, be a considerable asset to some newcomer communities. Immigrants and newcomers from colonized countries, who may be more familiar with the English or French languages, have greater access to information. Commonality of culture, it was suggested, is also a very powerful tool that brings newcomers together. One key informant provided an example of this with the Taiwanese community, that is internally cohesive, but distinct from other South-east Asian cultures such as the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Korean and both mainland and Hong Kong-based Chinese. Comfort levels lie in familiarity with cultural norms and practices as well as language and ability to communicate.

Religion

Data suggests that strong participation in religious activities is sometimes key in the social organization of some communities. For instance, focus group participants spoke to the strong role of churches in providing services similar to ISAP (Immigration and Settlement Adaptation Program, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada) which include assistance with filling out social insurance forms, health card applications, etc. Through religious institutions, communities receive emotional and social support, develop social networks and adhere to social values informed by religious belief. This is also true for Muslim communities, where leadership within mosques often goes unrecognized, according

to one key informant. In this way, organized religion can be an enabler of community leadership participation by providing a location and opportunity to become more involved in community.

Knowledge of systems

Immigrants and newcomers who know and understand how Canadian systems operate and who know how to negotiate them are better able to empower themselves. Often, as focus group participants suggested, the most significant barrier to participation is knowing how to participate in an informed way. Access to information on how the education system functions, how political life operates and what one's rights are, are fundamental to living in society. Without a clear understanding of the systems within which society functions, there is minimal incentive to participate, ability to challenge them or take action in the interest of social change. In-depth discussions focused on the significant role of service providers in bridging this gap, and also suggested language as a key tool that facilitates improved knowledge of systems.

2. Factors Enabling Service Provider Organizations

Focus group participants and key informants broadly spoke to factors that impact on the capacity of community-based organizations to foster community leadership participation. Research findings suggest that these include: varying capacities of service provider organizations in meeting community needs, recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity within communities, recognition of diverse understandings of leadership, the political environment of the host country, dedicated funding/resources, effective programs and services, and cultural sensitivity in organizations.

Capacities of service provider organizations

Participants emphasized the many roles of immigrant and newcomer service provider organizations, much of which was discussed in previous sections of this paper. However, the function of moving people from the first stage of settlement to the second stage of settlement was suggested as an example of one enabler of community leadership participation. What then became the focus of discussions on this topic were the individual capacities of service provider organizations to engage in broader, more concrete, targeted and tailored leadership development activities for the communities they serve. It was suggested that organizations that serve more established immigrant and newcomer communities are better positioned to engage in innovation that directly enhances the capacity of their communities to participate in civic life. Data indicates that newer service provider organizations, serving more recent and emerging communities, are less able to engage in financially supported leadership development activities as they are still struggling to develop a financial base for meeting settlement needs.

Recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity within communities

Service provider organizations that are successful in developing the leadership capacity of their communities are those that are able to recognize the cultural and linguistic diversity within their target groups, according to some key informants. Recognizing that newcomers from a particular continent, for example, come from different countries, cultures and often speak completely different languages, assists organizations in developing programs, services

and supports that build on the internal strengths of different communities and use approaches that are effective in engaging different ethno-racial and cultural populations.

Recognition of diverse understandings of leadership

Another factor that enhances community leadership participation is recognition that different communities understand leadership in different ways. This was discussed in more detail in previous sections of this paper, but stands out as an important and almost implicit understanding that is seen in service provider organizations, but is very much discounted in mainstream systems. It was suggested that service provider organizations that focus on strategies that engage communities within their cultural context are better able to elicit active participation from community members.

The political environment in the host country

Focus group and key informant data suggests that governments that actively recognize newcomers and immigrants as the lifeline and future of our country are more supportive of providing the resources, conditions and supports that newcomer and immigrant communities require in order to establish new lives in their new country. As one respondent stated, “you need to be able to advocate to a government that is listening and that values leadership and participation, otherwise there is no point”. The immigrant and refugee serving sector, it is noted, was deeply affected by the cutbacks implemented in the 1990s by the Conservative government in Ontario. Under the leadership of former Ontario Premier Mike Harris, much of the financial and systems support that existed for newcomers and immigrants was eroded and the sector is still challenged by this, as is discussed in greater detail in the section on **Funding**. Therefore, a government that actively recognizes the need for supports and provides opportunities for communities to develop and grow is a very important enabler of community leadership participation.

Culturally sensitive service providers

As stated earlier, respondents felt that knowledge of cultural norms and practices, are key in successfully promoting community leadership development. Some focus group participants and key informants felt that the comfort and familiarity of being in a space that “understands” a particular community enhances the possibilities for introducing leadership development activities. Communication was cited as a significant barrier for most newcomer and immigrant communities with limited English; while learning language, community members can be involved and feel their contribution is appreciated and recognized in culturally and linguistically sensitive locations. This, it was suggested, motivates and builds self-esteem within communities to become active outside of their own communities once sufficient language skills are acquired.

Dedicated resources

Research data suggests that dedicated resources for service provider organizations would be a very significant enabler of community leadership development. Most service provider organizations are funded for projects, and do not receive core funding. This puts a strain on organizations that have limited capacity to meet community needs. Currently, many service provider organizations obtain financial support for core activities and administration using a proportion of project budgets that pay for overhead and administration costs. Another

resource, apart from money, is physical space. Respondents suggested that there is limited availability of physical space for immigrants and newcomer communities to congregate and engage in social recreation activities. This, in turn, limits the scope and possibilities for program and service development that builds skills and capacity within communities if there is no location to deliver such initiatives. Recreation centres and large spaces often charge user fees or have rental rates that communities often cannot afford to pay.

Effective programs and services

Programs and services that build skills and capacity within communities was put forth as a strength that service provider organizations are able to draw upon. Knowledge of cultures and languages assist organizations in creating programming that provides participants and community members with the tools they require to better understand their environment. When a program is effective, it was suggested that greater trust relationships are established between service provider organizational staff and its client base. In some situations, respondents felt that clients view staff as leaders who are then able to encourage greater participation from the client and help them to build leadership opportunities for themselves.

“Community-based programs and services can assist communities to mobilize, restore and further develop their internal assets as a means of addressing fundamental issues such as poverty and injustice”, stated one respondent. Definitions such as this suggest that it is through service provider organizations that internal cohesion of a community can be galvanized and utilized to advance change. This is supported both by existing literature as well as by the notion of community leadership as that which utilizes the internal talents and skills of a community to address broader issues of social change. Findings from one focus group highlight this understanding where “Community leadership has to do with a process of self-organization, advocacy, social action, contribution to ongoing processes and improvement in the quality of life within the community”.

Challenges to Community Leadership Participation

While there are factors that support community leadership participation, according to existing literature, key informant and focus group data, there are many more factors that act as barriers to immigrant and newcomer participation at multiple levels. These can also be broadly categorized within those factors that affect the individual in his/her own community and those that are systems-oriented challenges.

1. Challenges to the Individual

Research data suggests that the main individual/personal factors that challenge the ability of communities to develop leadership participation include: socio-economic factors, levels of marginalization, period of migration and longevity of settlement in Canada, cultural factors, religion, political histories, access to resources, knowledge of the system, valued participation and meaningful decision-making capacity, and levels of community cohesion.

Personal resources

Focus group and key informant data suggests that a significant barrier for individuals to participating in their own or wider community activities is their level of income. For many newcomers and immigrants, access to gainful employment is a considerable challenge, while being low-income poses a greater barrier for some more than others. Particularly, low-income women of colour were referred to as a key group that requires specific supports that are often unavailable. Many cannot afford transportation costs to attend community meetings, or are unable to afford childcare, limiting their ability to participate in programs, attend community events and become involved in civic society in a meaningful way. Low-income, it was suggested, is often one element of a broader situation of disadvantage that is compounded by multiple levels of marginalization experienced by different ethno-racial communities based on intersectionalities of class, race, gender and culture.

One key informant used the example of the Filipino community, where it was suggested that if an individual has both money and status, the community will follow.

Access to resources

Individuals' access to resources and information is often a barrier to community leadership development as was articulated in the point on "Culture and Language". However, access to resources is also rooted in organizational structures, and this poses a significant barrier to informal groups and communities that mobilize and attempt to respond to an issue but require resources to do so. As one key informant expressed, the challenge for these groups is not so much knowing how to respond or what is out there, but rather accessing it without having an organization involved and dictating the solution and its implementation.

Another point that was discussed by respondents and key informants with regard to access to resources is the misinformation, misunderstanding or misstatement of a problem that leads to resources being spent on initiatives that will not address the root issue. One key informant spoke to his own experience of being a youth advocate and the challenges of having systems recognize the root causes of youth crime in some communities. The respondent expressed concern that major needs such as leadership programs for young women in some communities are often neglected in favour of programming that supports young males, who are perceived as the "problem" or source of criminal activity; the concern focused on the fact that the crime is external to the community and "travels" into a community because of various factors.

Levels of marginalization

Key informants and focus group participants cited numerous factors that contribute to the experience of marginalization. These primarily addressed issues such as single parent households, residence in low-income neighbourhoods, residence in social housing, un/underemployment, immigration status in Canada and gender. It was suggested that the intersectionality of many of these factors further limits capacities of individuals in many more ways than are recognized by mainstream society. For example, a female refugee claimant, who is also a single parent working three jobs and living in a low-income neighbourhood does not have the time to participate in leadership activities. If she is able to participate at all, she will be more likely to take an interest in certain areas that affect her and her family personally, such as participating on a Parent Council of a school that her

child(ren) attend. It is this type of local leadership that must be fostered, supported and recognized. It was suggested that society as a whole needs to begin empowering women by building their capacity to participate in organizations such as school committees, where they have both power and place to effect change in the interests of their children and those of other people.

The general lack of access to resources both on an individual level and institutional level limit access to available opportunities.

Political histories

Respondents working with newcomer and immigrant communities from countries of conflict shared a commonly expressed opinion that apathy can be a barrier to community leadership development in some communities due to previous experiences of marginalization and the replication of this experience in Canada. The general sentiment that was expressed is that the undervaluation of participation and involvement plays a role in creating the feeling of lack of initiative or incentive for participation. Many key informants stated that people express that “even if [they] participate it won’t make a difference”.

There is sometimes a fear of getting involved, especially for refugees and people fleeing political processes in their own countries, as expressed by several respondents. The distrust and fear is a consequence of the experience of opportunistic leadership that is assumed to be prevalent in all communities.

The African Francophone community, as described by one key informant, is also distrustful of leadership. Often community members find it difficult to believe that efforts of mobilization, assistance and support are genuine and not based on self-interest. Individual leadership, in fact, is problematic in some communities because of distrust based on political histories. According to some key informants, there exists “good leadership” and “bad leadership”. There is distrust, in many communities, of individuals who are ‘self-proclaimed leaders’. One key informant commented that, “Being recognized as a leader does not necessarily mean that one is bringing about change or equity in one’s own community”. Some key informants spoke to the experiences of people who have fled political processes in their own countries and are, therefore, distrustful of individual leaders; these types of political histories lead groups to question the intentions of an individual in aspiring to visible leadership positions, especially when they are political in nature. This has a significant impact on both the internal cohesion of a community as well as its ability to participate in systems broader than, and external to, their community. For this reason, some leadership programs that focus on the individual are not well-received or well-attended from a service provider perspective.

Period of migration and longevity of settlement in Canada

Data suggests that many of the newer and emerging communities find it more difficult to participate in broader civil society due to their limited length of residence in Canada and the strength or lack thereof of the community in Canada. In many Continental African Canadian communities, the most recent arrivals are often refugees from war-torn countries. This group is very different and has different needs than those who migrated earlier as independent

immigrants, as put forth by one key informant. It was suggested that this community does not have the same capacity as the Chinese or South Asian communities to participate in civic life, advocate for themselves and mobilize. What also emerged was the challenge of being absorbed into a broad umbrella group such as “African Canadians” without the recognition of diversity within the community and the particularity of need in different communities within this broader categorization.

Given the diversity within communities, there are differences in cultural understanding of leadership that correspond to political histories and periods of migration to Canada, as indicated by respondents. This provides some insight as to why certain groups do not see their participation in a group effort seeking social change as the exercise of leadership. It also provides a context for why individuals from war-torn countries, as suggested by one respondent, will either be very active or non-participatory in their community based on past experiences of political systems, structures of governance and vehicles for civic engagement. An example of this, one respondent suggested, can be seen in the Serb-Croat divisions, as well as divisions in the Polish community, where there is generally considerable suspicion around former involvement in communist activities, impacting on trust relationships, social organization and levels of cohesion among similar ethnic groups.

Data suggests that individuals from communities that have resources and supports already in place are better able to call upon these means that in the immediate and longer-term, support involvement and participation by removing some of the many barriers. Communities that comprise the newer “waves of migration” are particularly in need of supports; being newer communities, they face the need to develop community infrastructure, address issues of community cohesion and the very specific needs of individuals coming from areas of conflict.

As noted in both the literature and data, however, there is also the reality of some communities that, despite being in Canada for many decades, have still not experienced the same levels of community development, upward mobility and economic success as others. Examples of this can be seen in the diverse Black communities. Again, some factors that have created this experience include the lack of recognition of diversity in culture, language and political history (based on national lines rather than ethno-racial groupings) within different Black communities, and the geographic dispersion of community members within a city.

Cultural factors

Focus group and key informant data spoke of the role of cultural factors and norms in limiting community participation and leadership development in some communities. Some communities, it was discussed, experience internal issues of sexism, racism and classism that require supports from their new community in a new host country. While some newcomers and immigrants come from male-dominated societies, others come from societies that recognize individual rather than collective leadership, and factors such as this become significant in determining the levels of participation of individuals and communities in exercising leadership.

Lack of language ability was another issue that was often cited as a cultural issue by respondents, who spoke of the interconnectivity between information, communication and articulation of community issues. Without being able to fully communicate ideas, it becomes extremely difficult for newcomer and immigrant communities whose first language is not French or English to clearly articulate an issue, and how to address it in a way that is effective and recognized as legitimate by mainstream society.

Other cultural factors cited included the idea that in some communities, voicing an opinion is not appropriate and there is a fear of speaking about problems that are stigmatized in certain cultures. Examples of this included issues of domestic violence, child prostitution and mental health in some South Asian and Chinese cultures. Other examples included issues of drug abuse and youth criminality.

One respondent expressed that different cultural norms may sometimes result in resistance to understanding and appropriating 'Canadian' cultural norms. In some cases, this can lead to social exclusion in the current culture of society where difference in practice is still a barrier to social development and participation. The point was made that first generation Canadian-born children often adjust faster than adults.

In some communities, value is placed on leadership in a cultural context, where there may exist a patriarchal perception of leadership. This limits the ability of women to participate or take on visible leadership roles, as leadership is usually a task of a 'father', using the analogy of a family. It was also suggested that effective programs that would begin to address community issues where this is the case would most appropriately begin with education, information, knowledge building and awareness with men in some communities, which could then lead to greater community involvement over time.

In the Hispanic community, it was noted by key informants that there is a strong culture of organizing in general. This assists some Hispanic communities in being comfortable with aligning themselves with groups where they feel most represented. It was expressed that representation is not always in the form of singular leadership, but rather multiple and sectoral leadership. Sometimes it is leadership that overlaps and intersects, suggesting the complexity of the notion of leadership, and the multiplicity and diversity of mechanisms that are able to foster it.

In contrast to this, communities that do not have a culture of organization/mobilization are less inclined to group together on any issue. Where the Brazilian and Portuguese (from Portugal) communities will collaborate if there is a need and recognition of benefit from resource exchange and knowledge building, the Angolan and Mozambique communities do not collaborate with other Portuguese-speaking groups due to cultural differences and distinct belief systems among other factors. An example of this can be seen in the issue of childcare. Where the strength of community leadership participation of immigrant and newcomer women is often seen in their mobilization on this issue, the Angolan and Mozambique communities differ in their values around childcare with other Portuguese-speaking communities; this prevents collaboration and wider linguistic community mobilization on this community concern.

Religion

One key informant discussed the significant role of religion in limiting leadership development and participation in some communities. Specifically, the religion referenced was Jehovah's Witnesses, which according to their beliefs prohibits involvement in political activities of any kind. The extent of how this impacts on newcomer and immigrant communities has not been quantified nor explored in much depth. Religion was also referenced by other key informants as playing a role in how community values are shaped.

Knowledge of the system

A very important factor that affects individual capacity to be involved in almost any area of civic life is limited access to knowledge of systems. Data suggests that often newcomer and immigrant communities do not understand the school and education system, political system or the mechanisms they could access to become involved in these areas of life. Respondents felt that there is a need to "demystify processes" and that this will assist in enabling communities to effect change. Other interrelated factors were also discussed alongside this issue, such as language barriers and the lack of opportunity to be part of some systems which would enable some to better understand them.

Undervalued participation

Some key informants and respondents supported the literature in expressing how the lack of valued participation contributes to lack of community participation and leadership development. The lack of opportunity to participate in meaningful processes that require decision-making also demotivates individuals from wanting to become more involved. Much of the data on this issue focused on immigrant and newcomer communities lacking a general voice in making changes to systems, structures, programs and services that directly impact on their lives. It was suggested that this apathy often translates into a broader lack of participation in wider civic society.

Levels of Community Cohesion

Another factor that was highlighted by respondents is the difference in levels of cohesion in different communities. In the Continental African Canadian community, for example, individuals tend to organize along national lines more so than along ethno-racial lines. Chinese communities are somewhat internally divided between Mainland Chinese the majority of whom speak Mandarin, and the Cantonese-speaking population from Hong Kong. These groups are also different in their political histories of one being communist and the other colonized. Cultural differences between communities that are placed together by an artificial definition often results in cultural differences being subsumed and unrecognized by mainstream society or the dominant culture. In some cases, the limitations or lack of community cohesion are invisible to broader society and remain internal to the community concerned.

The great diversity that exists in communities becomes evident in the data, as factors that communities organize along are not the same. For example, as one respondent expressed, Brazilians feel more comfortable with the Spanish speaking community than the Portuguese, and the community will organize along commonality of language. Low levels of community

cohesion also generally lack internal support for leadership development and this also impacts on the development of community leadership participation.

2. Systemic Challenges

Focus group and key informant data suggests that the systemic challenges to the development of community leadership participation include the following: racism/discrimination/social exclusion, lack of recognition of leadership/undervalued participation, media, lack of political representation and funding. It is clear that the literature supports all of these findings, but focus group and key informant data does not address all the points found in the literature review.

Lack of recognition of leadership/undervalued participation

According to the majority of respondents, mainstream systems only recognize some leaders that such systems believe represent a particular newcomer or immigrant community. This is problematic for many reasons, but those cited by respondents focused on the interrelated issue of cultural, political and linguistic diversity within communities. Often, community leaders may represent a segment of a larger community, but the segment that is not represented and absorbed within the recognized leadership is disadvantaged in that their voice is never heard. Another point that was brought up addressed 'leadership fatigue' where particular community representatives become the only voice or opinion of an immigrant or newcomer community and as such, are asked to participate in advisory committees, sit on boards of directors, and represent their community in all spheres of civic life. As stated by many respondents, these individuals are not always the voice of the community or knowledgeable about all issues. The direction put forth by respondents is the need to open up such opportunities and recognize the plurality of leadership, both organizationally and systemically.

One key informant spoke to the issue of newcomer and immigrant youth, who are often discounted in discussions on leadership. One example put forth was the lack of recognition for young people who help to support their families, especially those living in social housing. Youth in such circumstances are not listed on the housing lease, preventing their employment income from being clawed back by the government. This is a form of leadership that is often ignored and subsumed by larger systemically recognized issues of criminality in such communities, assumed to be caused by local racialized and gang-involved youth. Another area of unrecognized youth leadership is the advocacy that young people do for one another. Given the transient nature of this demographic population, having youth interest sustained in meaningful ways must involve a process of empowerment where the young person gains something, be it confidence, skill or opportunity. Youth advocates are generally undervalued in society, according to one key informant, and their skill sets assumed to be exclusively youth-oriented. This is problematic in a society such as ours where youth are defined very broadly in terms of age. Newcomer and immigrant youth must be encouraged to be vocal and must receive recognition and support for their participation.

One key informant discussed the culture of youth mobilization and leadership. The Toronto Youth Cabinet is one entity that provides a seat for young people at the municipal

government table. Unfortunately, according to one respondent, representation in this Cabinet is dominated by middle class, privileged white youth who do not reflect the youth demographics or their experiences in the City. The problem arises in the capacity of systems to identify and reach out the youth in our society who would most benefit from being part of such a structure. Tools that successfully mobilize young people such as music, popular culture, sports and arts, are not being utilized enough to foster civic participation. Instead the culture of information sharing through facilitated workshops dominates formal leadership development programs, as well as mechanisms such as train-the-trainer programs. A suggestion was made to engage youth in the way that they are able to be engaged and participate: for instance the hip hop generation is one way that youth are finding commonalities and exploring issues of identity.

Many service providers and key informants emphasized how community leadership is frequently expressed through client mobilization on multiple issues, but stressed that it is not seen as community leadership. Thus, while community leadership is recognized, users of immigrant and newcomer service organizations do not necessarily understand it in the same way. Some examples of how community leadership is not recognized include client self-organization in women's groups, mothers' groups, mobilizing around issues of childcare, education, the school system, and seniors' issues. Taking these specific examples, one can see how immigrant and newcomer women are often neglected and their leadership unrecognized. These examples illustrate leadership being understood as mobilization and participation based on need.

Other forms of undervalued leadership that were cited include individual membership on group decision-making bodies such as Parent Councils, Senior Social groups, and Youth Advisory groups. These examples focus on the understanding of leadership as "people being involved in decision-making processes". Without the capacity to make decisions, leadership means very little.

Media

Respondents discussed the role of media that is often used as a tool to promote discrimination. One of the problems identified by respondents that could change this trend is an increase in the visibility of immigrant and newcomer professionals in this field, which, it was suggested, could serve to dispel myths, promote awareness and inform the public in a balanced way. Currently, there exists a disconnect between what is called "ethnic media" and "mainstream media". While both are necessary, there must be an overlap or commonality in the nature of factual reporting between the two, which could be addressed somewhat by providing more opportunities to immigrant and newcomer communities in this field.

Key informants also articulated concerns around media recognition of community leaders, which, as discussed under the section on leadership recognition, parallels the problems of leadership fatigue by focusing on particular leaders who are broadly recognized, and often asked to represent a community on all issues.

Lack of political representation

As evidenced in the literature and data, an important systemic challenge for some communities is the lack of political representation that would facilitate the creation of a political voice at the systemic level. Problems that have led to this, specifically in the Black communities, is the geographic dispersion of the community across the City. While geographic density of community members in particular neighbourhoods has historically facilitated the strength of some communities, such as the Italian community in Vaughn region, or the Chinese in Markham, as noted in the 1997 municipal elections (Siemiatycki and Engin, 1997), it is exactly this lack of geographic concentration of newcomer and immigrant communities that prevents the same trend of visible political leadership development. Also, to be noted is the correlation of higher income levels with increased political participation, which is evidenced in the feedback from respondents in this research when they refer to employment income as a precondition for leadership development.

There is a strong need for Members of Parliament, Members of Provincial Parliament, City Councillors and School Trustees to reflect the ethno-racial diversity of the City and to take their community's interests with them. It was noted by respondents that voting is problematic because the system relies on majority votes for candidates in geographically defined wards at the municipal level. Reference was made again to the fact of geographic dispersion of multiple immigrant and newcomer communities due to multiple levels of marginalization (low-income, social housing, etc.).

Status becomes a factor in political participation as well at other levels of government where citizenship is a requirement for both the vote and political candidacy. This immediately excludes immigrants and newcomers who are not Canadian citizens. Another concern that emerged through the research was the fact that political parties do not recruit or reach out to racialized, immigrant and newcomer communities unless the ethnic vote will considerably influence their standing in an election.

One key informant commented that they had no intention of taking on a leadership role in their community in Canada, but rather it was forced upon them by the need to articulate community concerns and issues. The respondent added that leadership "happens almost in spite of ourselves". It was noted as well that histories of oppression and colonialism are significant in determining the levels of participation in civil society. This is supported by research that suggests that members of racialized communities who have experienced oppression and discrimination choose not to participate in formal political life through voting, but rather engage in other forms of political activity, such as protests. (Saloojee, 2003, 39) The service provider organization then becomes the vehicle through which this trend is able to reverse given the appropriate conditions, resources and legitimacy.

Respondents often spoke about the need to better engage newcomer and immigrant communities in order to provide opportunities for these communities to meaningfully participate in political life, at the municipal level, if not at the federal and provincial levels.

Racism /discrimination/ social exclusion

One of the themes that emerged in the research was the problem of systemic racism in preventing immigrant and newcomer communities from accessing opportunities for

employment, housing, and basic services. Employment in particular, was often cited as a key factor in enabling immigrants and newcomers to overcome the initial challenges of the settlement process, which is usually most tied to the ability to earn income from gainful employment. As discussed in both the literature and research findings, many respondents felt that without basic needs being met, fostering leadership is hardly a priority for newcomers and immigrants.

Specific reference was frequently made to what is known as credentialism. “Credentialism is a phenomenon that occurs when an immigrant's skills or professional qualification is not recognized by a host country. While it is not outright discrimination, it severely limits the job opportunities of many middle-class skilled migrants to Canada. While, in some cases, a standard of safety prevents immigrants with professional qualifications from being recognized without further training and certification, for newcomers who cannot afford to spend the time to qualify or upgrade their credential in Canada, this could mean the difference between a minimum wage job and a professional position.” (Historica Foundation of Canada, 2003) This phenomenon is also a point of much advocacy in the community-based sector, especially with regard to access to professions and trades, in such professions as medicine and engineering.

Some key informants and respondents focused on the most recent manifestations of racism that occurred post-September 11th 2001, which led to the wide-spread stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists and public policy that infringes on basic human rights of individuals under the auspices of Canadian public security. Stereotypes and assumptions about cultural groups are neither new nor unique to Canada, but have impeded the ability of victim communities to empower themselves and create a voice that is recognized by mainstream society when personal risk is heightened to the levels that became evident after September 11th. Such instances demonstrate how very quickly entire communities can be socially excluded and unfairly treated differently as a result of negative media portrayal and public fear.

A survey respondent commented, with reference to a public education and awareness program run by the Roma Community and Advocacy Centre, that “For too long, the Roma people have been mis-defined by outsiders including researchers who have set themselves up as authorities representing the Romani people. We Roma now wish to define ourselves.” The goal of the program is to destroy the mythological “Gypsy”, and the media through which the stereotype is perpetuated; this is to be replaced by a genuine representation of the Roma, as a legitimate ethnic minority with unique origins, history, culture and language. This highlights how leadership responds to a need – that this stereotype debilitates all aspects of the life of the Roma people and acts as a barrier to their legitimate participation in broader society. In order to challenge this, and ensure that opportunities are available to its community, the community-based organization strives to combat the insidious nature of discrimination and racism through broader education and the promotion of awareness.

Another point that was introduced by one respondent was the issue of work-related stigma in professions such as domestic work and care-giving. These professions are most often

occupied by women and this reinforces existing stereotypes, while undervaluing the important work of the individual or community.

Although the literature explores other points of systemic racism, these were the areas of focus for respondents. However, this topic warrants further and ongoing research in terms of the long-term local and national consequences of such a limited vision for the entire country's economic and social future that is very much dependent on immigrant and newcomer communities.

Funding:

Funding was discussed in much detail in both focus groups and by key informants in interviews. For this reason, there is a separate section under summary findings on funding-related discussions; this section outlines the specific points put forth by respondents.

Obtaining funding is a challenging process for basic service provision, as articulated by many key informants and focus group participants. The majority of programs and services offered by service providing organizations are often subsidized by the service provider due to the rigidity of funding formulae which discounts particularities of workplaces. Issues that emerged included unionized and non-unionized workplaces, eligible costs for programming and the limitations of funding mechanisms and mandates. Although some respondents spoke to the delivery of settlement services in advancing leadership development, settlement programs themselves, as currently defined by government funders, do not directly support activities that promote and foster leadership development or participation in civic life.

As a result of this funding condition, financial support for effective leadership development activities is very limited. One key informant suggested that the shift of the United Way in supporting capacity building is a direction that the sector as a whole should consider as this provides opportunities to support the innovative mechanisms and programming that is necessary when working with diverse groups of newcomers and immigrants.

Some respondents articulated the exceptional challenge to those most in need of such supports, specifically service providers working with new and emerging communities. Newer organizations find it very challenging to obtain funding due to a lack of profile, years of service delivery experience and new Boards of governance. The limited funding such agencies receive must by definition focus on basic service provision, which does not allow for capacity building activities or any activities that could promote leadership development. In many cases, such funding focuses on assisting newcomers to fill out forms, obtain basic identity documents and provide referrals to other sources of support.

Funding for leadership development in communities is very limited and usually is accessible under capacity building mandates of funders. One key informant stated that the United Way has recognized the limitation in funds and has implemented a shift in its support to facilitate better and more flexible funding that would accommodate such activities. A respondent also spoke to the Trillium Foundation of Ontario's funding mandate, which also supports capacity building, but added that the process of obtaining funding is challenging and also

geographically based, limiting the support that can be allocated to one geographic area of the city.

Respondents also discussed the role of advocacy in community leadership development and the need to encourage individuals to create a voice for themselves. While this is a core function of representing communities and providing guidance on how they can empower themselves, there is very limited funding to support advocacy work and even less to teach advocacy. The challenge is the inability to state the problem, understand its source levels and begin to address it.

Leadership development programs that currently exist, it was suggested, tend to focus on fostering the leadership development of *individuals* rather than communities, for example the Maytree Leaders for Change. While this is effective in some communities, it is action through capacity-building and community development that involves more of the activities associated with broader *community* leadership development.

Analysis of Findings

“Community Leadership is the ability to:

- a. Articulate issues of communities, and therefore there must be a political activity that has a structural/political outcome;***
- b. Assume leadership for ourselves. Whatever we do must have some element of social change where innovation is built in, by definition.”***

- Key Informant

As data suggests, research findings support existing literature in highlighting the diversity and multiplicity of understandings of community leadership participation and conditions that foster/challenge its development in immigrant and newcomer communities. As definitions and understandings of community leadership differ greatly from community to community, community leadership, it was often stated, is best-developed using tools that build the capacity of communities and engage communities in their own development. In exploring this idea further, it became clear that capacity-building and community development strategies must be tailored to the particular experiences and needs of communities. It also became clear that resources and support for community

leadership development is greatly lacking; without such supports, the potential for civic engagement of multiple communities is at-risk, which ultimately impacts on the political and cultural life of the country.

What follows is an overview of certain themes that emerged which help to inform the recommendations of this research project.

Themes

Systems: Recognition, knowledge building and sharing: In reviewing research data, it is clear that there is a need for the mechanism of two-way communication and information sharing between systems and communities. The knowledge that newcomer and immigrant communities bring with them to Canada can, in fact, significantly contribute not only to the development of communities locally, but also to the systems, structures and broader social and political life of society, if supported and recognized. Currently, the lack of recognition of newcomer and immigrant knowledge, experience, skills and expertise limits the overall capacity of the sector to better engage, support and meet the goals of community leadership development and participation.

Gender: While participatory research data did not address the specific needs of newcomer and immigrant women in any depth, existing literature suggests that low-income women of colour experience multiple levels of marginalization. Key informant data does, however, suggest the need for innovation in strategy to provide tools for empowerment for this population. Ironically, although women of colour are often marginalized in broader society, in their homes and in other aspects of their lives, it is in the community and social service sectors where women of colour are most seen in leadership roles. In this sector, women are executive directors, agency volunteers, directors on governance boards, front-line workers and in all levels of organizations from programs implementation to management. This reinforces the notion that immigrant and newcomer service organizations are almost the only physical place where the traditionally marginalized groups are able to exercise leadership and be formally recognized for this contribution.

Youth: Data and literature suggest that youth are an undervalued segment of our population which to experience additional barriers to leadership recognition. Given the particular supports required for this group in sustaining interest in leadership development, it is remiss to neglect newcomer and immigrant youth as a group to be prioritized in dialogue on community leadership development.

Volunteerism: It is noted that very little was directly explored on the theme of volunteerism as a form of community leadership. Indirectly, however, respondents made reference to the participation of communities in volunteer activities as a subject subsumed in broader themes such as community participation, program and service provision and organizational governance. Service provider organizations alluded to a dependence on volunteers for unfunded leadership development activities. Afghan Youth is one organization that is exclusively volunteer run and managed, and is profiled in the section on examples of community leadership.

Enablers and challenges: the overlap

Some focus group participants and key informants suggested that community leadership can only take place once people overcome their immediate problems, and only then will there be time to think about leadership. Others felt the exact opposite, indicating that most of their community leadership emerges out of a need to address a problem. This theme of factors that are both enablers and challenges becomes the lens of analysis for this research, reinforcing the fact that the particular conditions of a community are integral to understanding why certain factors can enable one community and be a barrier to others.

Examples of this can be seen in the research findings where political histories can be both an enabler and a barrier to community leadership participation. Some communities that have experienced systemic oppression, colonialism and civil conflict will develop leadership in response to the need to

articulate and address community needs; other communities will not, due to distrust of individual leadership, fear or cultural factors that prevent certain segments of a community from voicing the need for social change. This again, demonstrates the importance of service provider organizations in articulating, acting on and advocating for social change in response to community needs in the absence of individual leaders such as politically-elected representatives or leaders at other levels of society.

Similarly, where language is a tool of cohesion in some communities, other communities give more importance to cultural factors in mobilizing their community. This is also true of religious beliefs, personal resources and social and political conditions.

Funding: Research findings suggest that funding is a consistent theme that generated in-depth discussion. The erosion of support for service provider organizations has led to current support for leadership capacity development being limited, insufficient, often misdirected and in need of a complete reconceptualization of approach.

Over the last decade, there has been a shift away from the core funding model, limiting the capacity of organizations to achieve their mission as funding has become increasingly tied to projects without the financial supports for overall infrastructure and administration. In addition to these challenges, reporting requirements have increased as well as the pressure on communities to develop partnerships to obtain joint funding with confirmed financial support from other sources. (Scott, 2003, 3-4) Recognizing that immigrant and newcomer service provider organizations are far more than simply service providers, these conditions concretely prevent the creation of sustainable environments to develop healthy communities. For existing organizations, this is challenging enough; for service providers serving new and emerging communities, these conditions make it almost impossible to access any funding at all. Many rely on fairly new community partnerships for support and assistance, which is often problematic due to the forced competition for the same limited monies. This means that in many cases, the actual value of the work being done is undermined by a focus on a cost-per-client analysis. This challenge is particularly disconcerting where at a time when Toronto's diverse ethno-racial population continues to grow while its support systems are steadily eroded. With the slow shift in support away from ethno-specific organizations which are the centre of a newcomer's lived experience in Canada, the challenges for immigrants and newcomers will only increase.

As seen in the research findings, while settlement services exist to provide basic information and supports, this is not adequate in assisting communities in their process of establishing themselves in a new society. Feedback indicates that projects, programs and services that are funded are often not rooted in the 'real' issues because the real issues do not warrant support within the mandate of funders. This makes these initiatives less meaningful and effective than they can be, as suggested by key informants. Funding bodies must recognize the need for diverse leadership development strategies and accordingly develop diverse funding models.

Funders also often rely on the notion of 'best practice' models, which act as a barrier to obtaining financial support for innovative services and practices. It is clear that there is no homogenous approach that can be applied to the most diverse city in Canada, and best practice models don't effectively apply to most immigrant and newcomer populations. Thus, attempts at innovation in

governance, service provision, program delivery, community mobilization, development and advocacy are often financially unsupported, and the most successful models of the above become unsustainable over the longer term. While there is a formal recognition of Toronto's ethno-racial diversity, there needs to be a corresponding recognition and appreciation for the multiplicity of difference that can result in exciting innovation, but more importantly, effectively build the capacity of newer communities to actively participate in broader Canadian society.

Some funding bodies have recognized the need for a shift in support. The Laidlaw Foundation, for example, is one of the only funding bodies that supports youth engagement and leadership through organizational change. The City of Toronto must also be credited with ensuring that agencies that do not receive core funding are able to request a percentage or a project budget to support administration and core operational costs. The federal department of Canadian Heritage also supports such costs and has moved towards multiyear funding through grants and contributions. (Other federal departments are moving towards multi-year funding, however core administration costs are not included). The United Way of Greater Toronto now supports community capacity-building activities. This demonstrates that the shift is beginning to occur, and needs to continue in this direction.

The Maytree Foundation in particular, focuses its support on refugee and immigrant populations. Granting streams serve to support the development of community capacity and the Foundation runs two separate leadership programs. One of these programs provides skills and training opportunities to immigrant and newcomer professionals in the sector to build formal leadership within service organizations. The other leadership program focuses on developing the skills of individuals in diverse sectors. Strengths of these programs lie in the development of skills such as advocacy, policy development, community organizing, community development, service delivery and budgeting, all of these being integral to the immigrant and newcomer service sector.

As evidenced in the literature and data, while some funding bodies are beginning to recognize the shift that is needed in funding paradigms, others are less in touch with the reality of what is needed to build a stronger model of support. There is a tremendous need for the recognition that service provider organizations do not simply provide services; the relationships between such organizations and their client groups serve to provide a holistic place and space for community development, leadership building, capacity building and supports for people on both the individual and community level. Rather than perpetuating the notion that a service provider delivers a "service" that is paid for, using the analogy of a purchase of service relationship, the human service sector must begin to be understood for what it is- the epicenter of support for the creation of strong communities.

Service Providers are Community Leaders

"Leadership by itself is an individual thing; this is not the same as community leadership. Community leadership has to have an element of community organizing and mobilization. By definition, it cannot be individual and thus must have the elements of political articulation and social change."

- Key Informant

Most service provider organizations consider themselves leaders in the sector and this is validated through the feedback and experiences of their membership or service groups. The ability to provide a place/space for people to come together is a key resource that fosters civic engagement and leadership; the supports and knowledge that agencies provide, further advance the ability of groups to take collective action. The ability to have a legitimate voice and opinion, and put forth a position of challenge on issues that directly affect a community is another key element that individuals feel is a role of service providers in fostering leadership development.

Some definitions of community leadership included “contributing to service delivery, decision-making, development and being part of planning committees”; “the interest of a group or individual to pursue goals or improve the standing of a community”; “the process of getting involved in community life to pursue a specific goal”; “remembering there are needs and trying to find solutions...everyone can be a leader”. All of these definitions imply an interest beyond oneself, illustrating that there is a fundamental goal of changing the state or conditions that a community is experiencing. Again, we see the overlap in the impetus for change stemming from either an individual who mobilizes a group, or a collective that comes together- this supports the notion that community leadership is seen in different ways depending on the nature of the collaboration, either between and by communities or within them.

The social and political voice of a community is one way in which mainstream society measures the success of a community’s leadership capacity and participation in civil society. Research suggests that the role of immigrant and refugee service provider organizations is integral in mobilizing the community voice in the context of exclusion from other forms of formal political participation. Saloojee suggests that formal political participation and participation in ethno-specific organizations is interrelated, citing examples where a high degree of participation in such agencies translates into high voter turnout. Reasons for this can be attributed to the degree of social capital that community-based agencies are able to provide, as well as the importance of information flows and political knowledge that social and organizational networks impart to their membership. (Saloojee, 2003, 37) It is in milieus such as these where trust relationships are developed, immigrants and newcomers experience mutual support and care, are able to rapidly respond to local problems, articulate individualized responses and mobilize, experience empowerment and responsibility, exercise functions of citizenship and develop leadership, enterprise and capacity in socially innovative ways. (McKnight, 1996, 18-19)

The data from study supports that immigrant and newcomer service organizations provide a space where immigrants and newcomers are empowered, are able to make meaningful decisions and therefore can exercise leadership. Existing research on the nature of empowerment makes the distinction between the realm of ‘the community’ and the realm of ‘the system’. John McKnight discusses society as organized through two basic ‘tools’: the systems tool and the community tool (also referred to as ‘associational communities’). In this paradigm, the structure of a system tool is designed to permit a few people to control many other people; the hierarchy is a means of exercising control. The community of associations is based on consent because it does not have anything with which to motivate people. McKnight explores how a system tool requires consumers and a community requires citizens, suggesting that while the consumer is a controlled individual, a citizen is the most powerful person in a democracy. If society is seeking empowerment, then the obvious

tool to utilize is the associational community, what is in this case, the immigrant and newcomer service provider organization. (McKnight, 1996, 18-19)

Feedback from consultations indicates that there are a number of activities that service providers engage in that foster community leadership participation. Mobilizing individuals and groups, advocacy activities, building the capacity of a community to articulate a problem/challenge, providing tools for empowerment to others and sharing information and resources are some key functions of newcomer and immigrant service provider organizations. Other functions include providing supports and opportunities for skills development, network-development and knowledge building and exchange through the provision of information, policy analysis, etc. One key informant noted that the way programs are delivered, what is done and how it is done, all have to be informed by an agenda of social change with a “structural/political outcome” in order to influence or change society, which is assumed to be the goal.

The role, therefore, of immigrant and newcomer service provider organizations is manifold and complex; it is cross-sectoral, multi-level and acknowledged by key informants as the nexus for immigrant and newcomer life in Canada. Community-based organizations play leadership roles at three broad levels of society:

- a. by fostering the individual leadership of community members;
- b. by building the capacity of communities through program /service provision and forging cross-community connections at the neighbourhood level; and
- c. by mobilizing communities and creating a political voice at the institutional/systems level.

By developing and implementing unique ways of engaging diverse communities, service providers invest in the capacity of individuals (community members, front-line workers, volunteers, committee members, members of the Board of Directors). Such agencies also mobilize, respond and strategize to address wider community needs, community leadership development and participation. This is done through mechanisms such as information-sharing, knowledge building, program and service delivery, research, and partnership development. Such agencies are also catalysts for effecting social change through various advocacy strategies, action-oriented research, and the development of socially innovative social and political paradigms.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper illustrates that community leadership does not have a single definition, nor can it be viewed outside of the context of other forms of leadership. Activities that individuals described as key to the process of community leadership development overlap with what is called community capacity-building and community development in the immigrant and newcomer service sector. Immigrant and newcomer service provider organizations are integral to the process of supporting and encouraging community leadership development, civic engagement and participation at the neighbourhood level and in the broader society. Agencies build community leadership through the provision of innovative programs, projects and activities that focus on grassroots organizing, knowledge building and mobilization, network development, advocacy and collective action.

Research data and existing literature suggest that there is an overlap in the factors that challenge and enable communities, depending on where and how a community is located in the Canadian context. This ‘location’, according to many key informants, is informed by the profile of community members in terms of their official status in Canada (independent or family class immigrant, permanent resident, convention refugee, refugee claimant, live-in caregiver, Canadian citizen, etc.) as well as other key factors such as socio-economic status, class, culture, race, gender and language. It is clear that no community is the same and the mainstream definitions of communities, and specifically different ethno-racial groups, need to be more flexible and informed by the diversity within communities in order to effectively promote greater civic participation and leadership development.

Data suggests that the system believes it is supporting leadership development, but is in great need of reorganization and a better understanding of the complexity of community leadership in a diverse, multiracial and multicultural society. This must be achieved through the recognition and valued participation of immigrant and newcomer communities in all sectors of society. Mechanisms to support this reorganization and vehicles to facilitate the process must be created at both service provision and decision-making levels. The environment in which we live and work as a society must change and be informed by newcomer and immigrant knowledge as well as that of the “mainstream” culture. It is only with these changes that we will be able to build a stronger and healthier society that is inclusive, democratic and that effectively supports community leadership participation and its development in all communities.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: There is no recognition of the differences in how leadership is understood and exercised in a diverse society.

- ***The sector as a whole must acknowledge this fact and respond by introducing new language, mechanisms and supports to recognize diversity within communities and effectively build the capacity of the service sector to engage them.***

Recommendation 2: Immigrant and newcomer service provider organizations are community leaders and are more than organizations that deliver services to their target populations; they are spaces and places where communities receive the tools they require to empower themselves, they are agents of social change and a location where participation is valued, recognized and encouraged as sites of social organization and mobilization.

→ ***There must be recognition that such organizations are more than service providers. This must begin with a change in language that names such organizations as more than a vehicle for delivering services as currently implied in a producer- consumer relationship. In order for this to be realized, such organizations must be supported in the work that they do that is not simply settlement service related or service provision related. There must be support for innovation in program development and delivery, advocacy, community organizing and initiatives that address the needs of communities as articulated by the communities themselves.***

Recommendation 3: There is no single standard model that will effectively support community leadership development in a diverse society.

→ ***This must be recognized and accordingly, changes made to funding to support flexibility in programs, services and activities that are funded to build community capacity and leadership development***

Recommendation 4: Many newer service provider organizations serving new and emerging communities continue to struggle with challenges of capacity due to lack of core and program funding.

→ ***This must be recognized and accordingly, support for such service provider organizations prioritized in municipal, provincial and federal funding policies and practices.***

Recommendation 5: There is a disconnect between what is funded and what is effective in meeting the goals of community leadership development.

→ ***Service provider organizations must be empowered and consulted to gain and share information on what is effective in particular communities in order to develop mechanisms for supporting effective and not necessarily best practices.***

Recommendation 6: Settlement is not a time-bound phenomenon, but is a longer-term process that involves the creation of new social infrastructures for society as a whole.

→ ***Service provider organizations must be given meaningful opportunities to determine the nature and scope of settlement services in order to effectively meet the needs of their communities. As such, service provider organizations must be included at decision-making tables where policy, programming and structural change decisions are made at the municipal, provincial and federal levels.***

Recommendation 7: Research shows that there are conditions that best foster community leadership. A combination of specific tools, capacity-building activities and policy directions must be employed to provide the supports necessary for those communities that have not achieved visible community leadership in all segments of society in order to advance a social equity agenda.

➔ ***Policymakers, funding bodies and the community and settlement service sector must engage in proactive policy development to ensure that equity is integrated into all areas of our society to enable broader participation of traditionally marginalized communities.***

Areas for future research

- The relationship between capacity building, community development, social inclusion, social capital and community leadership development
- The role of immigrant and newcomer networks and coalitions in building community leadership capacity
- Low-income newcomer and immigrant women: identification of effective approaches for support and leadership participation
- The landscape of settlement priorities with a focus on new and emerging communities (current levels of support, types of supports and how can we meet their needs)
- The relevance of the settlement service model as it exists now to a changing and diverse immigrant and newcomer population

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Appendices

Appendix 1: When Services Are Not Enough Interview Form

Date:
Name of organization:
Name of Respondent:
Position:

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this project.

As you are aware I am collecting information on organizations' experiences with programs and initiatives designed to foster community leadership participation. ***Please note if you decide to answer the questions on your own, please send it back to OCASI via fax to (416) 322-8084 or by e-mail to morellana@ocasi.org***

The overall goal of the project is to identify community-based programs and activities that bring people together in public places in the community, between private lives and social structures, be they communal or large-scale institutions. This is where leadership and empowerment, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation are fostered and developed through community development and civic engagement

Here are some of the questions we would like you to address:

<i>1. What experiences, if any, have you had with programs and activities designed to foster community leadership participation?</i>
<i>2. How does your own understanding of community leadership participation agree/differ with the understanding above?</i>

Appendix 2: Key Informant Interview Questions

The purpose of this research project is to explore and document the role of immigrant service organizations in community leadership development that fosters immigrant participation and inclusion at different sites of civil society.

In this context, we are approaching individuals, agency representatives, front-line workers and multilevel stakeholders to get a better sense of what community leadership means and how it is encouraged/discouraged, supported/not supported and under what conditions community leadership is able to develop in a healthy, concrete way.

Questions:

1. **What communities do you serve? Is there recognition of community leadership and it's development in the communities your agency serves?**
 - a) If so, how is it understood?
 - b) What types of leadership activities have the communities you serve been involved in? Are they political/cultural/grassroots/individual/collective...etc?
2. **How do you define community leadership participation?**
 - a) Are there factors/conditions that are barriers to community leadership participation? If so, what are they?
 - b) Are there factors/conditions that enable community leadership participation? If so, what are they?
3. **How do the communities you serve respond to leadership activities? For example, are they interested / disinterested, supportive / non-supportive, do they participate or not, etc...**
 - a) Do you think there are examples of community leadership that are not recognized as such? If so, please provide examples.
4. **What kind of community leadership approach do you use to foster leadership participation by members of the communities you serve?**
 - a) Under what circumstances is this approach optimized?
5. **Are there factors (such as culture, religion, age, period of migration, etc.) that influence the**
 - a) perception of community leadership? If yes, please elaborate.
 - b) involvement of individuals/communities in community leadership activities? If yes, please elaborate.

Appendix 3: Interview Questions for Funders

The purpose of this research project is to explore and document the role of immigrant service organizations in community leadership development that fosters immigrant participation and inclusion at different sites of civil society.

In this context, we are approaching individuals, agency representatives, front-line workers and multilevel stakeholders to get a better sense of what community leadership means and how it is encouraged/discouraged, supported/not supported and under what conditions community leadership is able to develop in a healthy, concrete way.

1. What is your understanding of community leadership?

Probe: do you believe there is leadership in communities?

Probe: what kinds of leadership, in your experience, have you seen in communities (individual, collective, issue-based, etc.)

Probe: do you think leadership development is the same in all communities? Is it unique in some communities? If so, how

2. Do you think it is important to support leadership activities? If yes, why. If no, why not?

Probe: What are the differences that you see between communities with strong leadership and communities without strong leadership?

Probe: How is this manifested in communities?

3. What are the ways in which funding supports leadership activities?

Probe: who are the funders? What do they fund?

Probe: do you think that the nature of activities that are funded are appropriate? If yes, why, if no, why not?

4. Do you think that leadership programs that currently exist are satisfactory? If yes, why, if no, why not?

Probe: (Maytree Leaders for Change, youth leadership programs, etc.)

5. What kinds of leadership activities do you think should be supported that currently are not?

Appendix 4: Examples of Community Leadership

“Community leadership participation is the link between community organization leaders and the community- this link is optimized when the latter become the former...”

-Key Informant

Given the limited resources invested in community leadership development in the sector, service provider organizations have created a culture of integration of leadership building activities into broader projects, programs and within their organizational structure. Using nine examples, the idea of community leadership is explored in the context of its complexity and the role of service provider organizations in supporting its development.

Service providing organizations listed a wide range of activities and programs that they believe effectively foster community leadership development amongst the communities they serve. Citing a few examples of community projects will demonstrate how agencies are innovative in promoting key group leadership principles through particular initiatives in which keen community interest is expressed and can be fostered. It is important to note that the success of these initiatives lies in their connectivity to the particular needs of a community. This section will also demonstrate how community capacity-building is used as a tool to promote community leadership development; while some of these initiatives are considered targeted projects or programs according to mainstream definitions, this discounts the leadership development activities that are built into the initiatives.

Below are a number of projects, programs, services and partnerships in areas such as mental health, social recreation, education, employment, political life, civic engagement, and social planning; these examples offer insight into the innovation required to address basic issues of community participation and leadership development in the context of broader society.

1. Hong Fook Mental Health Association Community Leadership Programs:

Hong Fook’s strength is in the philosophy of its organizational structure. Because the community members and consumer survivors they serve are generally excluded from decision-making forums, Hong Fook empowers its clients by ensuring their participation at all levels of the organization, from service delivery to organization management. The organization builds leadership by employing a philosophy of community capacity building, which they believe is fundamental to the healthy functioning of community dynamics and community leadership development. As stated by the Executive Director, “...leadership is walking alongside the patient; community leadership is growing with them.”

As a mental health organization, Hong Fook’s client/patient base includes Cambodians, Cantonese-speaking Chinese, Mandarin-speaking Chinese, Taiwanese, Koreans and Vietnamese. These cultures are very distinct in nature and require specific and unique approaches to leadership development. Servicing consumer survivors, their target groups experience multiple levels of marginalization and require specificity in approach, structure and implementation of capacity building initiatives. Day-to-day integration of such strategies involves consumer participation in

their own individualized service plan, and community involvement in group service planning activities. Hong Fook also employs peer-to-peer models of leadership training.

In order to effectively service its distinct groups, Hong Fook has set up advisory committees for each language group, which is the most significant tool each community uses to organize itself. The process relies heavily on community participation and begins with service provision, after which individuals become peer leaders. Through a gradual process, clients/consumers become volunteers, sit on advisory committees, be appointed to subcommittees and then are able to be nominated to the Board of Directors.

Some examples of how Hong Fook has helped foster leadership development can be seen in the “I Love Toronto” Campaign and the institutional support the agency provided to a group of community volunteers. This is an information line that began with volunteers who wanted to set up and run a telephone information service at the time of the SARS crisis in Toronto. Hong Fook provided the support and information this independent group of volunteers required, and the group established the service. It has run for two summers and the group is currently planning for implementation in the summer of 2005.

Another unique example of community leadership can be seen in a service that was set up for the Taiwanese community to explore the City of Toronto, their new home. Thirty volunteers planned an excursion to historical sights in the City on a Sunday morning in the summertime. The group anticipated that 70-80 individuals would attend. They advertised the tour using local media and asked participants to meet them at Finch subway station. 750 people attended and many had to be sent home as there were only 30 volunteers. This demonstrates the efficacy of strategy in bringing people together, building networks and utilizing effective methods to conduct outreach in particular communities. The leadership demonstrated by the volunteers in providing an orientation to newcomers to the City is significant and would not generally be recognized as leadership. However, these activities, located within a newcomer/immigrant experience, demonstrates a commitment to community building and civic engagement.

2. *Across Boundaries: Advocacy and Leadership Training Skills Building Program*

Across Boundaries is an ethno-racial mental health institution that runs an unfunded skills building program for consumer survivors. This program provides opportunities for participants to share and learn new skills in preparation for employment and daily independent living. This program is run by consumer survivors themselves, and this motivates survivors to participate and learn how to advocate for themselves. Education and training are critical to effecting change and improving service delivery. Although unique, programs such as this are very important to the healing/recovery process of the target population. By sharing information and resources, creative outreach projects can be conceived of that are formed through grassroots, client-driven community partnerships. It is through such processes of engagement that clients will empower themselves.

This program does not receive funding and, therefore, is only offered once a year due to budget constraints.

3. Regent Park: Bangladeshi Women's Group

The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) also believes in building the capacity of communities to develop their own leadership. In some cases, the leadership already exists, and the need is simply for supports, resources and recognition. One key informant cited the example of an informal group of Bangladeshi women in Regent Park mobilizing to address the need for specific After-Four programs in their community. They were referred to CASSA, and the organization worked with them to identify local agencies with which to partner in order to receive funding for their program. They did not want CASSA to run the program, and articulated that their needs were very basic: a host agency, funding and a location. They would do the rest.

This demonstrates how community leadership is usually unrecognized and unsupported outside of affiliation with a service provider organization. It was noted by the key informant how this is ultimately yet another barrier to community leadership development and participation.

4. Centre for Spanish Speaking People: The Stay In School Program

The Centre for Spanish Speaking People partners with the Organization of Latin American Students (OLAS) at Ryerson University, York University and the University of Toronto to address the issue of high school dropout rates through a unique mentorship program. Reasons youth cite for high levels of dropout focus on their experiences of frustration, lack of support, lack of places to go to express their concerns, discuss issues and receive supports. This program allows students to come together, develop team-building skills, make a difference in their community, and build relationships that help foster self-esteem, academic ability and personal and collective leadership.

The innovation in this program is the approach to addressing a unique concern within a particular ethno-racial community. Rather than utilizing the school system, of which students are not motivated to be a part, this program calls upon external partners to collaborate and address issues of education to encourage students to stay in school.

This is a funded program.

5. Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS):

This program matched newcomer women with Canadian-born women in order to facilitate work opportunities in Canada for new immigrant women. Five workshops on work-related topics included “navigating the culture”, “work ethics”, “résumé writing and interviews”, “learning style inventory” and “networking”. A volunteer placement followed completion of the workshops.

This program highlights what we know of what many newcomer women need; information on how the system works, a concrete placement activity that provides an opportunity for hands-on learning and connections to an individual/mentor for social support, assistance and advice.

This program was innovative and overcame barriers such as finding Canadian-born women who were willing and able to commit time to it, but due to lack of funding, the program was not sustainable.

6. *Kababayan Community Service Centre: Self-Development/Civics Program*

This program involves quarterly educational sessions entitled: “You and Canada...taking pride in our roots, looking forward to the future”. Program sessions include topics such as self-awareness, orientation to living in Canada and the Canadian way of life, leadership skills, volunteer development and empowerment.

This program is ongoing, but does not receive funding. Despite the fact that the information and support that the Filipino community receives through this program is fundamental to their ability to function in broader Canadian society, the agency has not been able to secure financial support. This demonstrates that service provider organizations often must rely on their own resources to deliver initiatives that would be effective in building community capacity and leadership.

7. *Hispanic Development Council: the Social Ecology Project*

This project aims to close the gap between ethnic and mainstream dynamics through the exploration of ideas around healthy and sustainable living that are implemented through a bottom- up process. Through program activities, the community mobilizes in areas of interest such as community gardening, urban reforestation and site naturalization. The project seeks to assist communities in establishing their own local projects and/or assist them in joining a mainstream environmental organization. Thus the community is engaged on an issue of interest, and capacity is built using the project as a framework for achieving broader civic engagement goals.

This project demonstrates how service provider organizations can organize local assets to build a stronger community.

8. *The Alternative Planning Group (APG)*

The Alternative Planning Group is a unique partnership among four ethno-racial advocacy groups. Members are: the African Canadian Social Development Council (ACSDC), Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA), Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) and the Hispanic Development Council (HDC). Together, these four community-based organizations come together for the purposes of creating and implementing collaborative strategies for inter-ethnic community planning and development, conducting integrative research and organizing joint community events.

The purpose of their collaborative relationship is to build the individual capacity of each organization and, by extension community, through sharing resources; to create a new paradigm of social planning that reflects the demographic, racial, cultural and linguistic diversity of the new City

of Toronto, and to build the social capital of ethno-racial communities so that they can emerge on the policy platform as a legitimate player.

Their ultimate goal is that through their partnership, they redefine the notion of community social planning within the City of Toronto by creating an alternative model for community and city planning.

This partnership model is dynamic and its strength lies in its flexibility. It is unique, socially innovative and maximizes the skills and capacities of multiple communities and groups in order to create new ways of thinking that are able to effectively respond to the diverse needs of a city like Toronto. The unique quality of APG is its partners who are “a Canadian construct”. The review they conducted in partnership with OCASI and PIN was cited as an example of innovation where “the beneficiary and the example of innovation is still Canada. The material conditions in Canada will affect it and the learning is broad”.

This partnership and the planning work they do is currently minimally funded. It must be noted that other service provider organizations conduct social planning work in their communities, but this work remains unrecognized and largely unsupported in terms of funding.

9. Afghan Youth

This organization is a completely volunteer based, youth-run, youth-led agency that services Afghan youth. They do not have an office nor paid staff. The biggest challenge facing a group such as this is developing their capacity and resource base to support their clients. One key informant commented that this organization could not receive funding after September 11th, 2001; without the “right” political environment to support this, the problem is more challenging.

Despite having no resources at all, Afghan Youth continues to run programs for its young people such as drop-ins, individual support, informal programming, etc. demonstrating that high needs alone are a factor in bringing out the leadership in communities.

It was that some smaller and newer agencies, and those serving new and emerging communities, do not have the capacity to absorb costs of unfunded programs and services. Therefore, they experience an added disadvantage when seeking support for their programs and services, which often employ unique and culturally specific approaches to addressing particular community problems. Some service provider organizations, therefore, experience multiple barriers in servicing their target communities. The irony of this lies in the fact that these communities are often the most in need of supports and services, suggesting the necessity for a fundamental shift in the way supports for communities are identified, defined, developed, implemented and financially supported.