Evaluation of the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) Initiative

February, 2022

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada

Table of Contents

Executive summary

Background

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) initiative. The evaluation was conducted in fulfillment of requirements under the Treasury Board's Policy on Results and covered fiscal years 2017/2018 to 2020/2021. The evaluation represents the department's first formal evidentiary examination of SWIS outcomes.

The evaluation's primary focus was to assess the design, implementation and effectiveness of SWIS, including how SWIS is delivered across regions (e.g., activity types, delivery models). The evaluation also included a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens, as well as considerations of COVID-19 impacts on SWIS design and delivery.

Summary of conclusions

The evaluation highlighted a clear and demonstrable need for SWIS. SWIS provides newcomer youth, children and their parents/guardians with school-based settlement services that are essential for integrating into Canadian society, and the Canadian education system. Moreover, the Government of Canada has an evident role in providing SWIS, despite education being a provincial/territorial responsibility, as the Federal Government is responsible for newcomer integration.

SWIS makes use of unique delivery models which allow service providers to adapt their programming for regional, provincial/territorial and local priorities. However, the evaluation found this flexibility creates challenges for reporting on initiative outcomes, comparing different service providers, and understanding what SWIS interventions work best for whom, and under what conditions.

Despite data limitations, the evaluation found clients perceive SWIS services to be useful and responsive to their needs, for instance by contributing to increased knowledge, involvement and performance in the education system. SWIS is also useful for referring clients to other settlement services needed on their integration journeys, and for enhancing cultural understanding on the part of school staff.

While the evaluation's findings generally showed SWIS contributes to newcomer settlement and integration, there are ongoing gaps in the department's capacity to report on the initiative's delivery and success. Fine tuning to SWIS' design and management would enhance the department's ability to monitor and report on SWIS outcomes. To this end, the evaluation put forward three recommendations.

Summary of recommendations

Current policy guidance does not specify required or core features of SWIS, nor does guidance contain an exhaustive list of SWIS interventions. While broad policy guidance is praised for its flexibility, it results in inconsistent activity offerings across Canada and a lack of common understanding of which activities constitute SWIS.

The evaluation identified extensive variability between Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) in how Needs and Assets Assessments and Referrals, Information and Orientation and Community Connections activities are being delivered, including the comprehensiveness of needs assessments and the frequency of SWIS interventions. Newly developed policies that better balance flexibility with standardization would help contribute to a higher level of consistency across Canada in how services are delivered, as well as help identify SWIS activities more clearly, supporting stronger data collection and sharing of best practices.

Recommendation 1: IRCC should confirm and implement a common definition of SWIS with core services/activities supported by clear policy/guidelines.

Current SWIS data collection procedures struggle to distinguish SWIS services from other settlement services, and efforts to systematically identify contribution agreements with SWIS components have not been fully implemented. Executing a reliable strategy to report on SWIS interventions and SWIS-serving organizations is crucial for reporting on and monitoring SWIS success.

The evaluation found a high level of variability in how different service providers report on SWIS interventions, even when conducting similar activities, and service providers are not always reporting on the same client types, including temporary residents. Moreover, as school staff are a key client group, IRCC should ensure reporting for activities delivered to this group.

Enhancing data collection will ensure IRCC is well-positioned to conduct stronger assessments of SWIS performance, in support of evidence-based policy decisions, improving SWIS design, and delivering more effective services.

Recommendation 2: IRCC should:

(A) Develop and implement a strategy to clearly capture the core SWIS activities and services and SPOs delivering them, identified as a result of Recommendation 1, in the Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment (iCARE) and Grants and Contributions System (GCS); and

(B) Implement and disseminate updated policies and guidance for SWIS-related data entry procedures.

The evaluation identified duplication between SWIS activities and other services in IRCC's settlement suite, as well as services offered in the community and by schools. While duplication is not inherently bad, there are challenges in understanding the full extent of duplication and whether it is addressing a need.

As IRCC does not require funding recipients to establish agreements with the school boards they serve, it is difficult to determine how the services offered by schools compare with the services offered by IRCC, creating a risk of overlapping roles and responsibilities. Moreover, IRCC does not mandate information sharing with schoolboards (or SWIS SPOs) with respect to clients served, which presents challenges in attributing successful education and settlement outcomes to participation in SWIS activities.

Another challenge facing SWIS is provision of services to ineligible clients. Under current policy guidance, no clients are denied services, regardless of their immigration status as a result of the in-kind contributions of schools. Presently, reporting on in-kind contributions are linked to contribution agreements as a whole rather than SWIS specifically, making it hard to assess value for money. Combined with reporting guidance, there are challenges in assessing the extent to which serving ineligible clients is impacting SWIS worker workload.

Consistent reporting on SWIS clients and activities would improve IRCC's ability to assess and attribute client outcomes to SWIS, and understand the trade-offs of in-kind contributions and serving ineligible clients.

Recommendation 3: IRCC should:

(A) Explore SWIS policy changes to ensure more standardized information sharing with IRCC on SWIS clients and activities; and

(B) Review and clarify the department's position, policies and procedures around providing SWIS services to temporary residents (TRs) to ensure a consistent approach across service provider organizations.

Evaluation of Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) – Management Response Action Plan (MRAP)

SWIS definition and policy guidance

SWIS is a cross-component initiative, meaning that programming may include components under different settlement funding streams. SWIS activities may include information and orientation, outreach to newly arrived families, needs assessment and action planning, service bridging, supported referrals, casework, non-therapeutic counselling, cultural understanding, interpretation, home visits, community outreach and advocacy.

Policy guidance on activities under settlement streams do not specify required or core features of SWIS, nor does guidance contain an exhaustive list of activities. While broad policy guidance is praised for its flexibility, it results in inconsistent activity offerings across Canada and a lack of common understanding of which activities constitute SWIS.

The evaluation identified extensive variability between Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) in how Needs and Assets Assessment and Referrals Services (NAARS), Information and Orientation (I&O) and Community Connections (CC) activities are being delivered, including the comprehensiveness of needs assessments and the frequency of SWIS interventions. Newly developed policies that better balance flexibility with standardization would help contribute to a higher level of consistency across Canada in how services are delivered, and would help identify SWIS activities more clearly, supporting stronger data collection and sharing of best practices.

Recommendation 1: IRCC should confirm and implement a common definition of SWIS with core services/activities, supported by clear policy/guidelines.

IRCC agrees with this recommendation.

The Department recognizes the need for national standardization and clear policy guidelines for service provider organizations to ensure consistent service delivery across the country.

Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) and le Programme des travailleuses et travailleurs d'établissement dans les écoles (TEE) are place-based initiatives that evolved according to local contexts.

IRCC will implement policy guidelines that allow for regional variation to meet the needs of diverse populations while prioritizing national coherence.

Action	Accountability	Completion date
Action 1A: Implement a SWIS-TEE Working Group with representation from IRCC NHQ and Regions to inform program-policy development and funding guidelines for call for proposals 2024 to implement a consistent and coordinated approach (in consultation with SWIS and TEE Providers).	Lead: Settlement and Integration Policy Branch (SIP) Support: Settlement Network (SN)	Q2 2022–2023
Action 1B: Develop a national policy framework based on a common definition of SWIS and TEE and core services, including issuing policy guidelines and resources for service provider organizations.	Lead: SIP Support: SN	Q1 2023–2024
Action 1C: Create a dedicated role for SWIS and TEE Coordinators to promote consistency among and within all IRCC Regions and support implementation of a national policy framework.	Lead: SIP Support: SN	Q4 2022–2023

SWIS data collection

SWIS faces issues in data collection. While the department has undertaken efforts to flag SWIS activities in Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment (iCARE), current measures do not adequately distinguish SWIS services from other settlement services. Similarly, efforts to identify SWIS-serving SPOs in Grants and Contributions System (GCS) have not been implemented fully. Until IRCC executes a reliable strategy to identify SWIS activities and SWIS-serving organizations, the department will struggle to report on performance in a quantitative or systematic manner.

The department also needs to ensure collected data are meaningful and entered consistently. The majority of SWIS community connections activities in iCARE include insufficient information to understand what interventions took place. Similarly, when different SPOs conduct the same activity, there is a high level of variability in data entry and reporting. The evaluation also identified confusion and variability over which activities need to be entered in iCARE, and for which client populations. These issues in data collection prevent the department from attributing successful program outcomes to SWIS interventions, and create challenges in understanding best practices. IRCC must therefore ensure policies around data collection are well understood by IRCC and SPO staff. In addition, the department does not collect quantitative data on services provided to school staff (e.g., teachers, administrations). As school staff are a key client group, with defined outcomes, IRCC needs to ensure data is collected for this group.

Enhancing data collection will ensure IRCC is well-positioned to conduct stronger assessments of SWIS performance, in support of evidence-based policy decisions, improving SWIS design, and delivering more effective services.

Recommendation 2: IRCC should (A) Develop and implement a strategy to clearly capture the core SWIS activities and services and SPOs delivering them, identified as a result of Recommendation 1, in iCARE and GCS; and (B) Implement and disseminate updated policies and guidance for SWIS-related data entry procedures.

IRCC agrees with this recommendation.

The Department recognizes challenges with collecting consistent quantitative and qualitative data for SWIS which contributes to gaps in reporting and hinders IRCC's ability to broadly analyse effectiveness, as well as across different demographic characteristics.

The 2020 implementation of SWIS flags in the iCARE and GCS systems have contributed to learning more about the programming. However, full implementation of the flags, combined with consistent reporting standards, is required.

Actions undertaken under Recommendation 1 will also help to better identify the objectives of interventions with school staff as a key client group, and guide the development of the reporting regime, and what outcomes are to be measured.

Action	Accountability	Completion Date
Action 2A: 1. Create a national SWIS outcomes and indicators framework including identifying key information collection gaps.	Lead: SIP Support: Chief Data Office (CDO), SN	Q1 2023–2024
2. Update the iCARE and GCS data requirements, and the Newcomer Outcome Survey (NOS) and Annual Project Performance Report (APPR) data collection tools, to ensure SWIS services are accurately captured and monitored	Lead: SIP Support: SN, CDO	Q2 2024–2025*
Action 2B: 1. Develop and implement SWIS data collection guidelines for funding recipients to support the next intake following call for proposals (CFP) 2024 and ensure national standardization; monitor for reporting compliance and accuracy.	Lead: SIP Support: SN	Q4 2023–2024

Note: The proposed completion date corresponds with plans underway within Settlement and Integration Sector (SIS) to contract with a third party to support the update of some of these systems.

Information-sharing on SWIS clients and activities

The evaluation identified instances of duplication between SWIS activities and other services in IRCC's settlement suite, as well as other services offered in the community and offered by schools. While duplication is not inherently problematic, for example, where there is great demand for services, there are challenges in understanding the extent of duplication and whether it addresses clients' needs.

IRCC does not require funding recipients to establish agreements with the school boards they serve, nor does IRCC have agreements with all school boards. As a result, there are challenges in understanding how the services offered by schools compare with the services offered by service providers, creating a risk of overlapping roles and responsibilities. Moreover, as IRCC does not mandate that schoolboards or SWIS service providers share information on all clients served, it is not possible to quantify the existing level of duplication, or attribute successful education and settlement outcomes to participation in SWIS activities.

Another challenge facing SWIS is the provision of services to ineligible clients. Under current policy guidance, no clients are denied services, regardless of their immigration status. For other settlement services (e.g., language training), clients are obligated to provide unique immigration identifiers to receive services. Under SWIS, clients are not required to do so as a result of the in-kind contributions provided by schools. Consequently, it can be difficult to assess the impact of serving ineligible clients on SWIS worker workload. Consistent reporting on SWIS clients and activities would improve IRCC's ability to assess and attribute client outcomes to SWIS, and understand the trade-offs of in-kind contributions and serving ineligible clients.

Recommendation 3: (A) Explore SWIS policy changes towards more standardized information sharing with IRCC on SWIS clients and activities; and (B) Review and clarify the department's position, policies and procedures around providing SWIS services to TRs to ensure a consistent approach across service provider organizations.

IRCC agrees with this recommendation.

SWIS was put in place as a federal intervention in elementary and secondary schools to directly assist newcomer students and their families with settlement needs. Because settlement is a shared space between IRCC and provinces and territories where co-planning occurs – this results in a variability of arrangements, clients and gaps, which SWIS programming helps to address.

The Department recognizes the importance of collecting standardized information on core services and addressing duplication when it does not provide value for investment or meet the needs of clients. While avoiding duplication entirely in this initiative is an ongoing challenge (due to the nature of SWIS), IRCC will continue to reduce duplication to the furthest extent possible.

The Department is committed to ongoing engagement and collaboration with federal, provincial and territorial partners on service provision for SWIS clients, including Temporary Residents (TRs). This includes highlighting gaps and identifying opportunities with provincial/territorial (PT) partners. Settlement and Integration Sector (SIS) will also leverage initiatives that are aligned with the objectives of SWIS such as IRCC's commitment to support Employment and Social Development Canada under the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS).

Action	Accountability	Completion Date
Action 3A: 1. Mandate the SWIS-TEE Working Group (created under recommendation 1) to map service delivery, identify areas of duplication, and address those that do not provide value for investment or meet the needs of clients.	Lead: SIP Support: SN	Q4 2022–2023
2. Under Action 2, rec. 1, develop policy guidelines on: (i) roles and responsibilities of SWIS partners regarding information sharing, privacy, and referrals; and (ii) reporting requirements for funding recipients to ensure standardized information sharing among SWIS partners for all client groups (newcomer students, parents/guardians, and school staff).	(i) Lead: SIP Support: SN, CDO (ii) Lead: SN Support: SIP	Q1 2023–2024

Action	Accountability	Completion Date
Action 3B: 1. Engage the FPT Settlement Working Group to review the needs, gaps, and approaches to serving clients. This work will contribute to the overall improvement of SWIS and how to organize delivery, in partnership with the provinces and territories.	Lead: SIP Support: SN	Q3 2023–2024
2. Develop policy guidelines to inform CFP 2024 and delivery approach in time for the next intake. Specifically: (1) SWIS service provision and scope of reporting for temporary residents to ensure consistency across funding recipients; and (2) reporting requirements for in-kind contributions.	Lead: SIP Support: SN	Q4 2023–2024

List of acronyms

APPR	Annual Project Performance Report
CA	Contribution Agreement
CC	Community Connections
CDO	Chief Data Officer
CFP	Call for proposals
ED	Executive Director
ERS	Employment-Related Services
FPT	Federal/Provincial/Territorial
GCMS	Global Case Management System
GCS	Grants and Contributions System
G&C	Grants and Contributions
iCARE	Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment
IRPA	*Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*
I&O	Information and Orientation
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAARS	Needs and Assets Assessment and Referrals Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOW	Newcomer Orientation Week
PD	Professional Development
PIP	Performance Information Profile
PR	Permanent Resident
PT	Provinces and Territories
SIP	Settlement and Integration Policy
SIS	Settlement and Integration Sector
SN	Settlement Network
SPO	Service Provider Organization
TEE	Travailleurs et travailleuses d'établissement dans les écoles
TR	Temporary Resident
WIN	Welcome and Information for Newcomers

Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) Profile

Settlement Workers in Schools description

IRCC administers the Settlement Program to help newcomers settle and adapt to life in Canada, setting them on a path to integration. To deliver high-quality services to newcomers, IRCC conducts calls for proposals (CFP) which allow applicants to apply for and receive funding to provide customized services to address specific gaps and needs.[1]

SWIS is a cross-component initiative, meaning that programming may include components under different settlement funding streams including Needs and Assets Assessment and Referrals (NAARS), Information and Orientation (I&O), Community Connections (CC), and Employment-Related Services (ERS). More specifically:

- NAARS helps determine what services clients need and provides referrals for clients to receive them.
- I&O helps provide information for clients to help them settle in Canada.
- CC helps clients learn about get engaged in their local communities
- ERS helps clients prepare for the labour market.

SWIS services range in intensity based on the needs of the student, their family, and their school. SWIS activities may include information and orientation, outreach to newly arrived families, needs assessment and action planning, service bridging, supported referrals, casework, non-therapeutic counselling, cultural understanding, interpretation, home visits, community outreach and advocacy. Some Service Provider Organizations (SPO) also provide orientation services such as Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW) and Welcome and Information for Newcomers (WIN), which prepare newcomer students and families to enter into the school system.

SWIS is currently offered in all IRCC regions.

SWIS client groups and objectives

The overall expected outcomes of SWIS programming are consistent with those of the Settlement Program[2], however the Settlement and Integration Sector (SIS) developed additional outcomes[3] for each client group to guide SWIS programming. SWIS serves three main client groups: newcomer students, newcomer families and school staff.

The short term outcome for newcomer students is engaging in the school system, receiving information and accessing school programs, after-school activities, summer employment, and community resources. The long term outcome is sense of belonging that supports educational attainment and provides full information about future education/career opportunities.

The short term outcome for newcomer families is familiarity with the school system and Canadian culture, including involvement in school activities, awareness of community and government resources, support in conflict resolution and connectedness to school/community services/networks. The long-term outcome is integration into all aspects of Canadian society and empowerment to support student academic/career endeavours.

The short term goal for school staff is that they are culturally competent and aware of community resources that can meet newcomer needs (and support accordingly). The long term goal is capacity to support integration and the school culture being adapted to promote inclusion.

SWIS delivery models

There are currently four main approaches to delivering SWIS:
- SPOs receive funding and place settlement workers in schools on an itinerant or regular basis;
- SPOs receive funding and channel resources to school boards;
- School boards receive funding and subcontract to SPOs; and
- School boards receive funding and manage the projects directly.

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[1] For more information on how the need for SWIS is assessed by IRCC and SPOs, as well as stakeholder engagement on SWIS see Annex C.

[2] See Annex A: Settlement Program Logic Model
[3] These outcomes are not fully operationalized or tracked by current systems.

Evaluation context and background

Overview

This report presents the results of the SWIS Evaluation.

The evaluation was conducted by IRCC's Evaluation and Performance Measurement Division between July 2020 and November 2021.

The design and approach to the evaluation were determined in consultation with IRCC branches involved in the design, management and delivery of SWIS, and the terms of reference were approved by IRCC's Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee secretarially in June 2020. The evaluation aimed to develop an evidence base regarding SWIS performance, best practices and lessons learned with a view of informing the development of a national policy framework for SWIS.

Evaluation focus

The evaluation's primary focus was the design, implementation and achievement of expected outcomes of SWIS, including how SWIS is being delivered in different regions across the country (e.g., types of activities and services, delivery models, types of partnerships for service delivery). The evaluation also assessed, to the extent possible, SWIS performance in integrating newcomer youth and families into the Canadian education system and society.

The evaluation incorporated a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens, which included, among other factors, consideration of client: age, gender, immigration status, country of origin, mother tongue/linguistic profile and geographic location (i.e., urban and rural).

The evaluation also considered the impact of COVID-19 on the design and delivery of SWIS, with a view of identifying best practices and lessons learned that could be used to inform changes to SWIS.

Evaluation scope

The evaluation covered fiscal years 2017–2018 to 2020–2021.The evaluation also included activities under le Programme des travailleuses et travailleurs d'établissement dans les écoles (TEE).

As SWIS may be funded under various settlement streams, the evaluation defined SWIS activities as those delivered in elementary or secondary schools, as well as activities delivered in other locations which were tagged in administrative databases with a SWIS indicator. This distinction was made as settlement workers deliver services in other public institutions (e.g., libraries), but these activities were not included in the project scope.

Evaluation questions

To what extent is SWIS responding to a demonstrable need?

To what extent is there effective and responsive management of SWIS?

To what extent is SWIS providing responsive and culturally sensitive support to help newcomer students and their families?

To what extent is SWIS supporting the integration of newcomer students and their families into the Canadian education system and in Canadian society?

Methodology

Document review

Document review was used to gather contextual information about SWIS, inform survey and interview questions and assess SWIS design and performance. The document review was comprised of 112 documents including external and academic literature, internal and SPO-based policy guidance, departmental reports, provincial/territorial (PT) agreements, job descriptions and working documents.

Survey of SWIS clients

An online survey was conducted with clients who were identified in the Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment (iCARE) who received at least one SWIS service between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2020. The survey targeted current students aged 15 or older, former students aged 15 or older and parents/guardians with children who attended school in Canada. The survey was available in English, French, Arabic, Tagalog and Simplified Chinese. The survey was sent to 132,924 clients, of which the majority were adults (81%). The survey was open between April and June 2021. 9,900 responses were received, including 6,498 parents/guardians, 1,960 current students and 1,442 former students.

Survey of SWIS service provider organizations

An online survey was conducted with Executive Directors (EDs) of SWIS-serving SPOs. Survey questions focused on descriptive factors of SWIS implementation, including SPO experience, client types (e.g., PRs, TRs), activity types, professional development (PD) and resourcing. The survey was available in English and French, and was open for three weeks. The survey was sent to all 97 SPOs flagged as SWIS-serving in IRCC's Grants and Contributions System (GCS) at the time of data collection. Responses were received from 55 EDs.

Survey of SWIS workers

An online survey was conducted with settlement workers of SWIS-serving SPOs, collecting information on the roles of the workers, including the types of services they provide and challenges they may face in delivering SWIS. The survey also collected perspectives on SWIS effectiveness in contributing to integration, academic success, inclusiveness and awareness. The survey was available in English and French, and was open for three weeks. A cascade approach via SWIS SPO EDs was used to reach potential survey respondents. Responses were received from 287 SWIS workers.

Key informant interviews

Interviews were conducted with 19 staff from IRCC's Settlement and Integration Policy (SIP) and Settlement Network (SN) branches, including representation from all regions (i.e., Western, Prairie, Ontario, Eastern). Interviews assessed SWIS implementation and operations and explored successes and challenges.

Administrative data review

Administrative data analysis was conducted using iCARE data on SWIS services received between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2020. Sociodemographic information stored in the Global Case Management System (GCMS) were merged with iCARE data. Taken together, the data review was used to develop a profile of activities and services delivered under NAARS, I&O, ERS and CC streams, and to develop a profile of clients who receive SWIS services.

Case studies

Case studies were conducted with 13 SWIS SPOs, and included document review, administrative data review, interviews with SPO management and SN officers in charge of contribution agreements (CAs) and focus groups with SWIS workers. Cases were selected base on consultations with subject matter experts, to ensure representation of different SWIS delivery models (e.g., school boards, community organizations), urban/rural SPOs, and SPOs that deliver TEE.

Limitations

Overall, the evaluation used complementary quantitative and qualitative data to reduce gaps and create integrated findings based on multiple lines of evidence. The evaluation also implemented a variety of mitigation strategies where possible to ensure findings were reliable and could be used with confidence. Nevertheless some limitations and their corresponding mitigation strategies have been identified.

iCARE and GCMS data entry

Prior to 2020, no flag was available to indicate whether a settlement service was a SWIS or non-SWIS settlement service. A proxy measure was created in consultation with subject matter experts, to identify which activities were SWIS. The measure included any SWIS-indicated services (i.e., post-2020 implementation), as well as any services delivered in elementary or secondary schools. Consequently, the SWIS proxy measure likely captures activities that were delivered in schools but which were not SWIS, and likely misses activities that were delivered in other locations (e.g., clients' home, at the SPO) but were SWIS-based.

Another issue with data was that not all SPOs choose to enter iCARE data on the clients they serve, whether those clients are temporary residents (TRs) or permanent residents (PRs).

GCMS records "secondary or less" education, which does not distinguish between adults who completed high school and adults with no schooling whatsoever (i.e., 0 years). Moreover 21% of adults had "not stated" (i.e., missing) education. As a result the evaluation had limited information on the client population's experience with education for analysis purposes.

SWIS SPO survey representativeness

IRCC does not have a comprehensive list of SPOs that provide SWIS. In 2020, a flag was added to GCS to be able to identify SWIS-serving SPOs. However, the evaluation found evidence that this flag was not fully implemented (i.e., missing some SPOs known to deliver SWIS) for the evaluation. While the survey population was made up of the 97 tagged organizations, results from this survey may not be representative as they do not reflect the complete population of SPOs providing SWIS. Survey results are therefore exploratory and should be considered in tandem with other methods, such as data from the case studies.

SWIS client survey representativeness

The survey relied on self-reporting with respect to client status (e.g., current or former student, in-school versus dropped out). The survey also relied on self-reporting of having received SWIS services, as not all services are provided under the SWIS acronym (e.g., in-school settlement workers, multicultural liaisons).

Moreover, it was not clear whether email addresses in databases belonged to students or their parents/guardians, which presented a challenge in obtaining parental consent. As a result, only students aged 15 or more were invited to participate in the survey, and therefore results reflect an older youth population.

SWIS worker survey representativeness

IRCC does not have a comprehensive list of SWIS workers, nor their contact information. As a result, the evaluation employed a cascade approach to reach respondents whereby SPO EDs received open survey links and were asked to forward the list on to workers at their organization. This approach made it impossible to calculate a response rate or weight responses to a population, and also add potential survey bias over who received and responded to the survey.

These survey results should therefore be considered exploratory, to be used in conjunction with other lines of evidence, for example SWIS worker focus groups and interview questions about SWIS workers.

SWIS worker focus groups

SWIS worker focus groups also relied on the cascade method used for the SWIS worker survey. Therefore, evidence from the SWIS worker focus groups should also be used in conjunction with other lines of evidence, such as interviews and survey results.

Profile of SWIS clients

Between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2020, 231,487 unique clients received an in-school or SWIS-tagged settlement service.
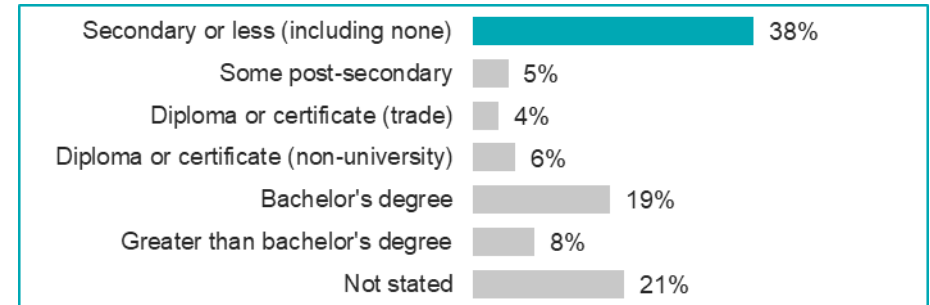
Overall clients

- Over half of clients were adults (53%).
- While over half of clients were female overall (53%), a greater share of minor clients were male (51%) compared to female (48%). A much greater share of adult clients were female (59%).
- Nearly three-fifths of clients had knowledge of at least one official language at admission (58%).
- The most common countries of citizenship were the Philippines (14%), Syria (14%), India (12%) and China (9%). No other countries comprised more than 5% of countries of citizenship.
- The most common mother tongues were Arabic (21%), Tagalog (11%), Chinese (9%) and English (6%). No other languages comprised more than 4%.

Permanent resident clients

- Most clients recorded in iCARE were PRs (89%).
- Nearly half of PRs were economic immigrants (49%), followed by resettled refugees (39%) and family class immigrants (11%).
- A small portion of PRs had a previous TR status (13%). Of those PRs who had a previous TR status, many held a previous work permit (88%).
- Nearly all PRs who received services were admitted to Canada in 2011 or later (95%).

Figure 1:   Adult SWIS clients by education status

Secondary or less (including none)	38%
Some post-secondary	5%
Diploma or certificate (trade)	4%
Diploma or certificate (non-university)	6%
Bachelor's degree	19%
Greater than bachelor's degree	8%
Not stated	21%

[Source: GCMS]

Figure 2:   SWIS clients by age category

0 to 4 years old	4%
5 to 9 years old	15%
10 to 17 years old	28%
18 to 29 years old	10%
30 to 39 years old	22%
40 to 49 years old	17%
50 to 59 years old	4%
60 years old or more	1%
Not stated	0%
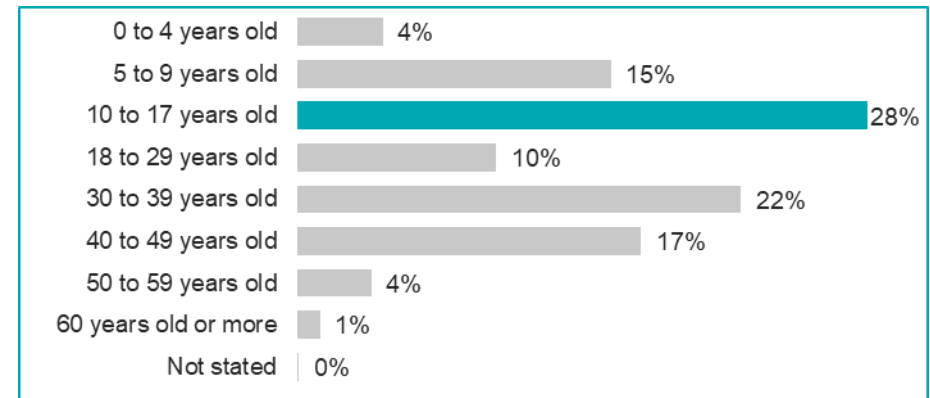
[Source: GCMS]

Figure 3:   Permanent resident SWIS clients by year of admission

2020	5%
2019	15%
2018	17%
2017	17%
2016 to 2011	42%
2010 to 2000	5%
Before 2000	<1%
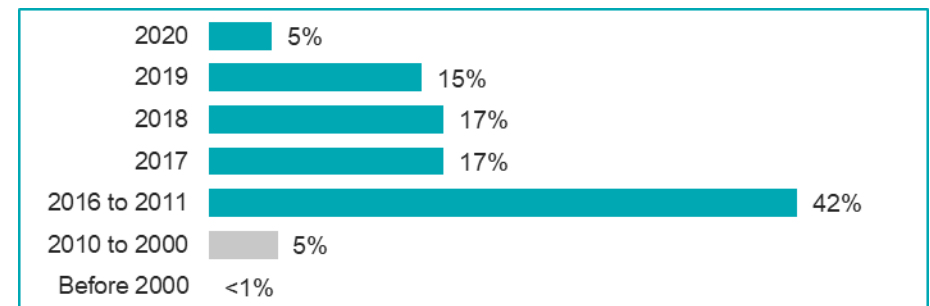
[Source: GCMS]

Profile of SWIS activities

Incidence of receiving settlement services by stream

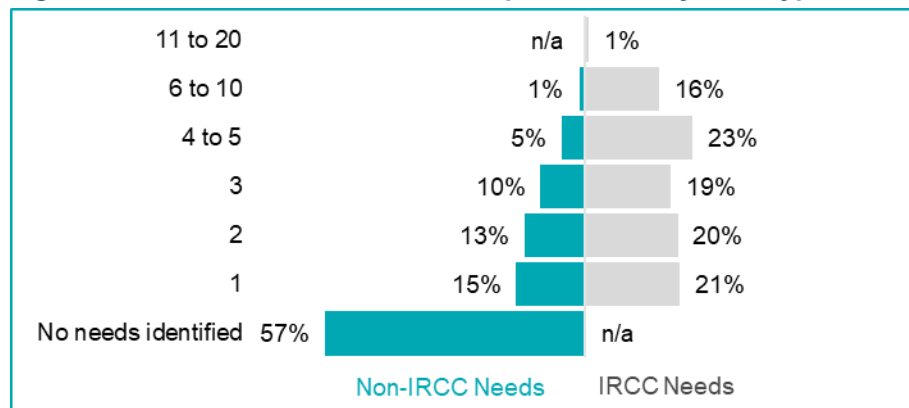The evaluation found that between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2020, of the 231,487 clients who received at least one SWIS service:

- About half (49%) received at least one NAARS tagged as SWIS or delivered in a school.
- More than four-fifths (84%) received at least one I&O tagged as SWIS or delivered in a school.
- Less than a third (29%) received at least one CC tagged as SWIS or delivered in a school.
- Nearly none (<1%) received at least one ERS tagged as SWIS or delivered in a school.

Figure 4:   Number of needs identified per NAARS, by need type

	Non-IRCC Needs	IRCC Needs
11 to 20	n/a	1%
6 to 10	1%	16%
4 to 5	5%	23%
3	10%	19%
2	13%	20%
1	15%	21%
No needs identified	57%	n/a

[Source: iCARE]

SWIS NAARS profile

Between 2017 and 2020, 118,087 unique clients received SWIS NAARS — 1.4 SWIS NAARS on average, for a total of 166,101 SWIS NAARS delivered.

The most common IRCC program needs identified were for knowledge of education in Canada (73%), knowledge of community and government services (60%), access to local/community services (55%) and knowledge of life in Canada (42%)[4].

The most common non-IRCC program needs identified were for community services (31%), education/skills development (21%) and non-IRCC language training (13%)[5].

Overall, 73% of SWIS NAARS resulted in at least one referral, with 517,630 unique referrals made between 2017 and 2020.

The most common referrals (when needs were identified) for IRCC programming were for increased access to local community services (76%), improved language skills (72%) and increased knowledge of community and government services (70%).

The most common referrals for non-IRCC programming were for community services (91%), health/mental health/well-being (88%) and non-IRCC language training (88%).

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[4]   Other IRCC needs include knowledge of working in Canada, knowledge of education in Canada, increased social networks, increased professional networks, increased level of community involvement, improved language and other skills, and finding employment.

[5]   Non-IRCC programming needs include food/clothing/other material needs, housing/accommodation, health/mental health/well-being, financial, family support, language (non-IRCC), education/skills development, employment-related, legal information and services and community services.

## SWIS Information and Orientation (I&O) profile

Between 2017 and 2020, 194,019 unique clients received a SWIS I&O service — 5 services on average, for a total of 974,727 I&O services delivered.

I&O is delivered to clients one-on-one, as a family (e.g., children with their parent/guardian) or as a group (e.g., multiple SWIS clients from different families). Activities were generally evenly split overall between one-on-one (37%), family (33%) and group (30%).

I&O activities can cover one or many topics.[6] About two-thirds of activities covered more than one topic (65%), with nearly all covering five or fewer topics (92%). The most common topics were Education (71%), Sources of information (e.g., Information on SPOs, government websites; 44%) and Community engagement (33%).

Between 2017 and 2020, SWIS I&O activities resulted in 995,392 unique referrals. While 59% of activities did not result in a referral, as activities may include multiple topics, 24% of activities had more than one referral. The most common referrals were for community engagement (55%), employment/income (50%) and money/finance (41%).

Figure 5:   Unique topics covered per SWIS I&O activity
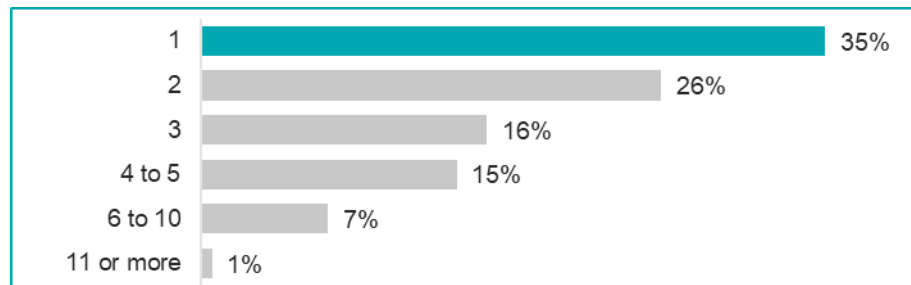
[Source: iCARE]

SWIS Community Connections profile

Between 2017 and 2020, 63,719 unique clients received at least one SWIS CC service — 5.5 services on average, for a total of 353,150 CC services delivered.

63% of CC activities were targeted-matching and network events/activities and 91% of activities were delivered to groups.

Contrary to I&O and NAARS, CC activities are reported in iCARE as covering one topic/focus as opposed to multiple topics. The most common focus/topics were connecting with other newcomers (25%), access to local community services (13%), inter-cultural sensitivity and understanding (12%), getting involved in the community (12%), connecting with settled immigrants or long-time Canadians (11%) and informal problem solving (11%).

Community-based group events/activities are further subdivided into specific activity types, including events pertaining to culture/history (16%) sports/recreation events (15%), field trips (11%) and neighbourhood days (1%). However, the majority of SWIS CC activities are currently coded as "other" (58%).

Similarly, targeted matching and networking events/activities may be "Canada Connects"[7] (21%), youth leadership projects (15%), networking activities with other newcomers or Canadian citizens (11%) and conversation circles (7%), but again many of SWIS CC activities are also coded as "other" (47%).

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[6] Overview of Canada, Sources of information, Rights and freedoms, Canadian law and justice, Important documents, Improving English or French, Employment and Income, Education, Housing, Health, Money and Finances, Transportation, Communications and media, Community engagement, Interpersonal conflict and Becoming a Canadian Citizen.

[7] Canada Connects helps newcomers settle by matching them with volunteers from the community to support their integration journey.

Need for and federal role in delivering SWIS

Finding 1:	There is a need for settlement services among newcomer youth, children, parents and guardians, especially as they relate to education. Moreover, there are benefits to delivering settlement services in schools.
Finding 2:	Although education is a provincial responsibility, the Government of Canada has a clear role to play in providing SWIS as it is responsible for the settlement and integration of newcomers to Canada and schools are an important access point for newcomer children and youth.

Need for education-related settlement services

Early interventions in newcomer children's education are essential for integration. Literature reviewed showed youth face challenges integrating into the education system[i] (e.g., reduced access to services/resources, bullying) and barriers to academic success[ii] (e.g., lack of familiarity with school norms, access to language instruction, participation in school activities). Youth who struggle to integrate are also at-risk for substance abuse, delinquency, depression[iii], and gang recruitment[iv]. Interviewees felt parents/guardians may have limited proficiency in official languages, limiting their ability to support their children (e.g., help with homework). These challenges were felt to be amplified for populations, such as refugees and older students.

Internal documentation showed through its programming, IRCC is committed to addressing the systemic barriers newcomers face. According to interviewees, SWIS was conceived as a proactive outreach mechanism, to increase newcomers' awareness of settlement services and refer them to services as required. SWIS has since evolved to include providing information to families on school topics (e.g., report cards, homework expectations, communicating with teachers). Key informants added that compared to traditional settlement services, SWIS services are specialized/tailored to the needs of students and youth.

Moreover, SWIS workers surveyed indicated there was a need for SWIS services in their community to a great extent (94%).

Federal role in delivering SWIS

While education is a provincial/territorial (PT) responsibility[v], promoting successful integration of PRs into Canada is an objective[vi] of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA). The *IRPA* stipulates the act should be applied in a manner that facilitates cooperation between the Government of Canada and PTs[vii]. Working with PTs to deliver settlement services is central in mandate letters, Annual Reports to Parliament, and departmental plans. Accordingly, IRCC has agreements with PTs on settlement responsibilities, which vary in specificity on education and settlement, and service delivery is co-planned in many jurisdictions.

Interviewees largely felt the federal role in providing SWIS is appropriate. Some key informants noted significant gaps would emerge if SWIS were no longer funded, in particular reduced access to services.

Benefits of delivering settlement services in schools

Literature review found newcomer youth in Canada identify schools as important sites for their settlement, social inclusion and belonging[viii]. Document review and interviewees highlighted that schools can act as gateways by offering timely access to direct (i.e., on-location) services and by providing referrals to other SPOs. Schools are thus a convenient access point for newcomers. Some prospective clients may not be aware of available settlement services, or may not have time to access the services they need, but as all children in Canada must attend school until school-leaving age[ix], there is guaranteed access for children and their families.

Interviewees also noted non-traditional client groups are able to benefit from SWIS, such as school staff (e.g., teachers, administration) as SWIS workers help raise awareness of newcomer needs and promote inter-cultural understanding. Internal documentation suggested integrated approaches (i.e., incorporating schools, clients and SPOs) to service delivery are a central theme for successful settlement services. SWIS is therefore considered a best practice in cooperation building.

Effective and responsive management of SWIS

Differences in SWIS delivery

For various reasons (e.g., staff availability, union rules, funding, volume of clients), some activities are not delivered by all SPOs. For example, most case study SPOs did not report conducting home visits, and the share of surveyed SWIS workers who reported providing home visits varied by PT. In addition, some SPOs report services under ERS settlement streams while others do not.

An evaluation of IRCC's Settlement Program (2018) found mixed results with respect to whether definitions of I&O, NAARS, ERS and CC were clear. Contemporary SWIS is flexible as it allows SPOs to provide services under any of these streams, but this flexibility comes at the cost of not being able to compare many activities, or in some cases, fully know what interventions are taking place.

One major difference was the availability, format, duration and target audience of orientation activities. Duration of orientations ranged from one-to-two week camps with overnight activities, to single-day at-school sessions and ad hoc orientation only. Orientations also varied in who delivered activities (i.e., SWIS workers, peer leaders and/or school staff to varying degrees) as well as target audience (i.e., students, parents/guardians, school staff and non-newcomer students). Differences were attributed to factors including location, funding, and availability of staff during the summer.
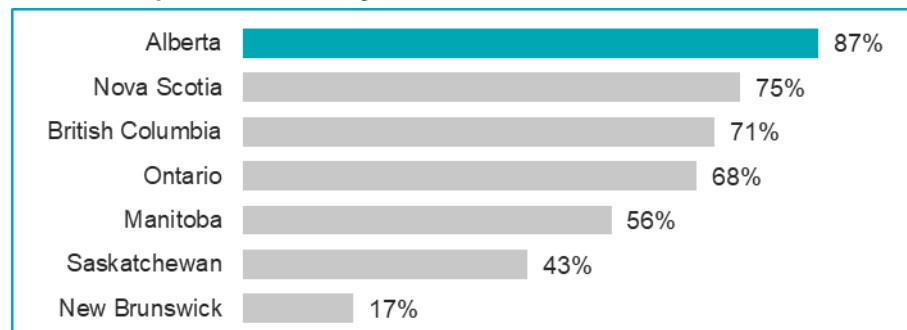
Common delivery features of SWIS

Although TRs are not eligible to receive settlement services normally, no clients are denied settlement services in schools due to the in-kind contributions of schools (e.g., office space, supplies).

SPOs from all case studies reported providing services to PRs and TRs. While in-kind contributions may be reported in Annual Project Performance Reports (APPR), these contributions are general to the CA rather than being tied to SWIS directly. Moreover, contributions reported in APPR are not linked to specific activities or clients served, making it hard to assess value for money.

Although SPOs reported recording services under different settlement funding streams (e.g., I&O vs. CC) SPOs and interviewees suggested the breadth of SWIS services available were similar across Canada. For example, information sessions for students and parents, training and support for school staff, referrals to other SPOs and community services, and itinerant services (e.g., working at different locations as required) were common across case studies. While all SPOs from case studies reported providing NAARS as part of their SWIS delivery, these activities were not always recorded in iCARE.

Figure 6: Percentage of SWIS workers who provide settlement plans, by province/territory


Province/Territory	Percentage
Alberta	87%
Nova Scotia	75%
British Columbia	71%
Ontario	68%
Manitoba	56%
Saskatchewan	43%
New Brunswick	17%

[Source: SWIS worker survey]

19

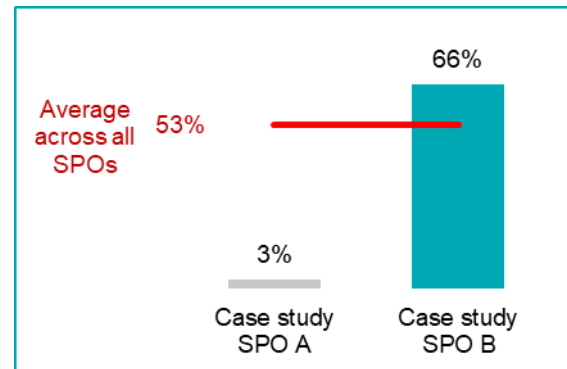## Variability between SPOs in client characteristics

Analysis of iCARE and GCMS data identified considerable variability between SPOs with respect to client characteristics. To illustrate these differences, characteristics of all SWIS clients overall (as an average) were compared with characteristics of clients from SPOs involved in case studies (as a range)[8].

Figure 7: Differences – clients who are permanent residents

[Source: iCARE and GCMS]

Figure 9: Differences – clients who know English and/or French
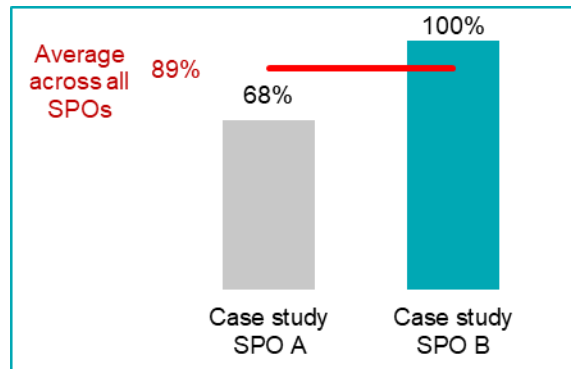
[Source: iCARE and GCMS]

Figure 8: Differences – clients who are adults
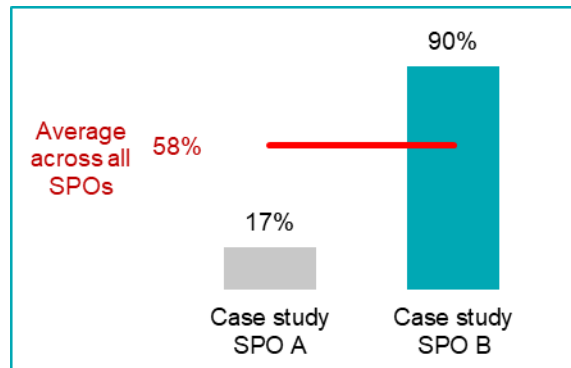
[Source: iCARE and GCMS]

Figure 10: Differences – clients who are refugees
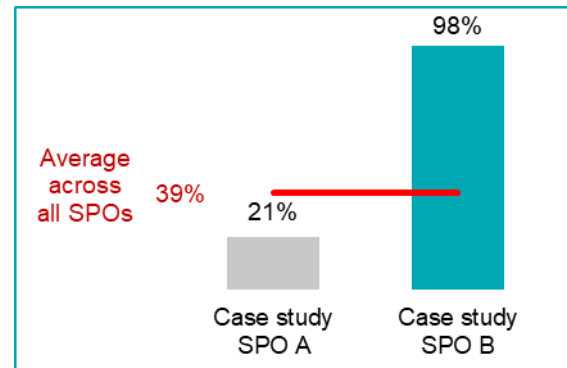
[Source: iCARE and GCMS]

With respect to clients served, SPOs had large differences in the proportion of clients who are PRs, adults and refugees, and the proportion of clients with knowledge of at least one official language.

Based on client characteristics, the evaluation found evidence that while some SPOs are not reporting any TR data, at other SPOs TRs make up nearly a third of clients reported in iCARE (32%).

Although overall services were mostly split between adults (53%) and minors (47%), some SPOs reported serving adult clients only rarely (3%), whereas at other SPOs adult clients made up two-thirds of the client base (66%).

The evaluation previously noted challenges with respect to interacting with clients and parents in different languages. At some SPOs, most clients knew at least one official language (90%), whereas at others the share was less than a fifth (17%).

The evaluation also noted refugees may experience particular challenges. Some SPOs reported serving refugees nearly exclusively (98%), whereas at others the share was just over a fifth (21%).

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8   SPO names are anonymized for confidentiality purposes

Variability between SPOs in service delivery

Data showed variability between SPOs in how services are delivered. To illustrate these differences, characteristics of all SWIS clients overall (as an average) were compared with characteristics of clients from SPOs involved in case studies (as a range)[9].

Figure 11: Differences – NAARS that identify more than one need

Average across all SPOs — 88%
Case study SPO A — 76%
Case study SPO B — 100%

[Source: iCARE]

Figure 12: Differences – I&O activities that focus on three or more topics

Average across all SPOs — 39%
Case study SPO A — 12%
Case study SPO B — 83%
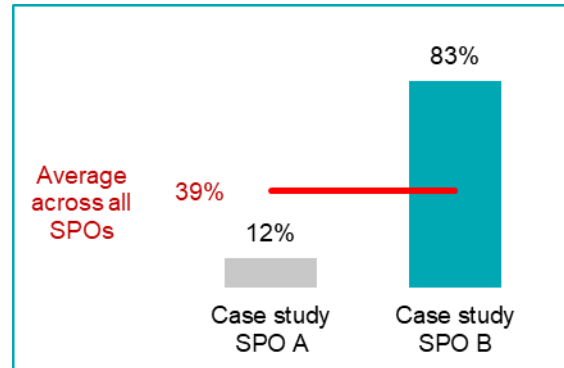
[Source: iCARE]

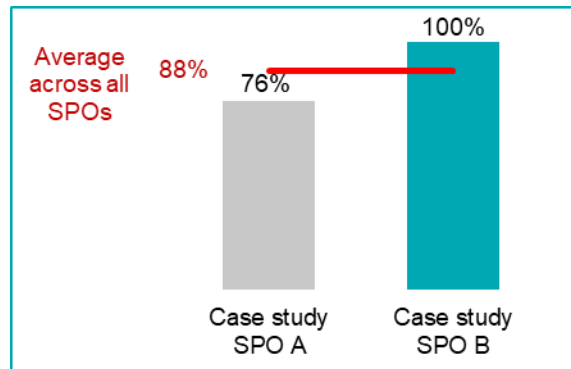**Figure 13: Differences – NAARS that result in more than one referral**

Average across all SPOs — 75%
Case study SPO A — 68%
Case study SPO B — 100%
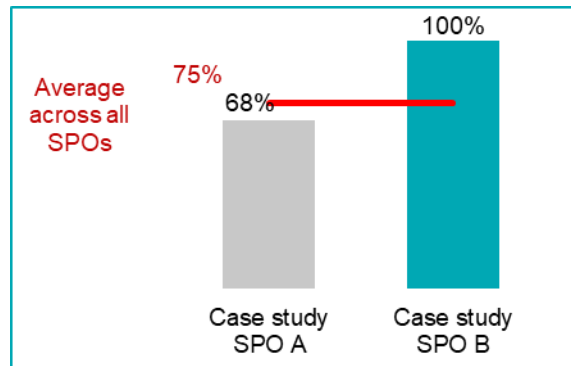
[Source: iCARE]

Figure 14: Differences – I&O activities that result in more than one referral

Average across all SPOs — 41%
Case study SPO A — 10%
Case study SPO B — 99%
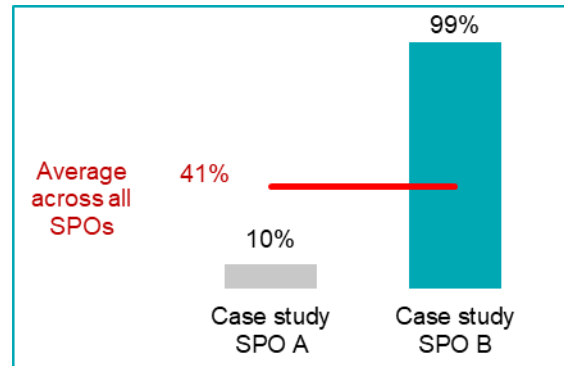
[Source: iCARE]

The evaluation revealed differences in the way SPOs report on (or conduct) NAARS activities and in the numbers of referrals that result from NAARS activities as well as differences in the number of topics SPOs cover in I&O activities as well as the number of resulting referrals.

Moreover, administrative data of I&O activity topics also vary. For example, while nearly three-quarters of I&O activities noted education as a topic (71%), SPOs from case studies ranged from 24% to 99%. Further, iCARE data showed when topics were identified there were differences between SPOs with respect to referrals that were provided. For example, SPOs providing information on health then provided referrals in 40% of activities overall, but the range in Case study SPOs was 6%-100%.

iCARE data also highlighted differences in delivery with respect to settlement streams. Two SPOs from case studies never reported services under the CC stream and four SPOs never reported services under NAARS.

Differences were also evident within streams. For example, in the proportion of family-based I&O interventions (overall 33%, range: 3% to 96%) and share of CC activities[10] that were conversation circles (overall 7%, range: 0% to 100%).

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[9] SPO names are anonymized for confidentiality purposes.
[10] Under activity subtype: targeted matching and network events.

Reporting on SWIS activities

As SWIS is part of the broader Settlement Program and is funded through multiple settlement streams, IRCC identified a need to add "flags" to identify activities as "SWIS" in iCARE databases and identify which CAs include "SWIS" in GCS databases.

In March 2020, SWIS flags were added to iCARE and GCS. However, use of the iCARE flag has been inconsistent as many SPOs continue to report into iCARE without using the SWIS indicator. Of clients who received in-school or SWIS-flagged services after or on April 1, 2020, 30% were not flagged as having received a SWIS service, suggesting there are different interpretations of what constitutes SWIS activities between SPOs.

Similarly, while the GCS flag has been implemented for many SPOs, some SPOs known to deliver SWIS are still not identified with the SWIS flag. In the absence of functioning SWIS flags, data collection and reporting on SWIS is limited to anecdotal results and use of proxy measures for quantitative findings[11]. As these flags have been used inconsistently, it has not been possible for the department to systematically differentiate SWIS from other settlement activities, resulting in challenges in attributing desired settlement outcomes to SWIS interventions.

Another complication in iCARE reporting is that common iCARE data entry practices have not been adopted by all SPOs. With respect to collection of information on clients,

not all SPOs are willing to share service delivery data for TRs; as a result, reporting on this population is inconsistent. Interview and case study data further suggest not all SPOs are willing (or able) to collect identifying information on minors, citing privacy and confidentiality. The large differences between SPOs with respect to which settlement streams SWIS services are reported under make it challenging to compare services of different SPOs in a quantitative manner.

IRCC's APPRs can be used to report on SWIS clients not captured in iCARE, however this information is inconsistent across CAs. Moreover, APPR reporting is insufficient to assess client outcomes as it reports in aggregate only, with limited capacity to differentiate between client types or SWIS interventions.

Figure 15: Differences – SPO clients who received at least one SWIS-tagged or in-school NAARS
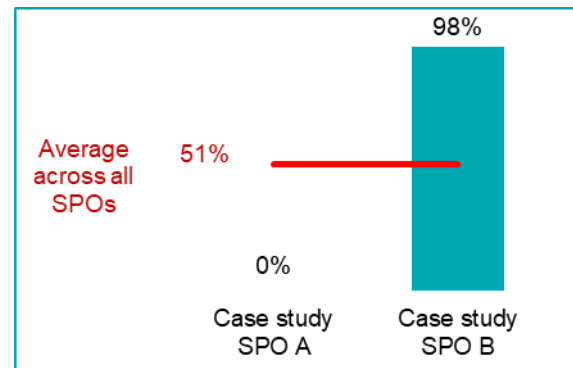
[Source: iCARE]

Figure 16: Differences – SPO clients who received at least one SWIS-tagged or in-school CC service
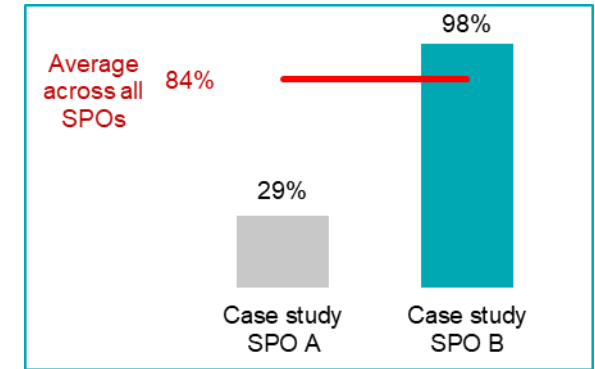
[Source: iCARE]

Figure 17: Differences – SPO clients who received at least one SWIS-tagged or in-school I&O service
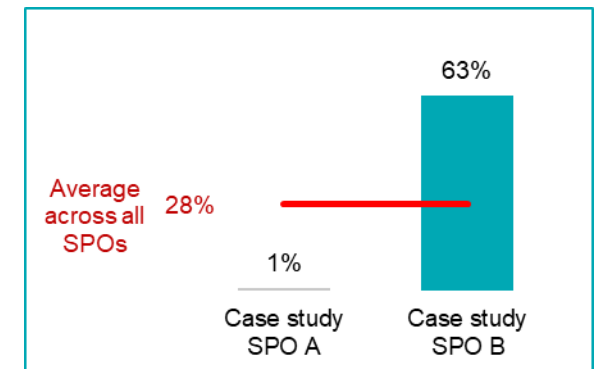
[Source: iCARE]

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[11] For more on the limitations of proxy measures used in the evaluation, see Data Entry- iCARE and GCMS under Limitations.

Finding 4: There is overlap between SWIS programming and other settlement services and other services offered in schools. Given the flexible SWIS design, there are challenges in assessing the extent of duplication and whether it is problematic.

Challenges of cross component initiatives

Roles and responsibilities of SWIS providers (e.g., schools, community organizations) are delineated through signed agreements, which include project descriptions, objectives, activities, client targets and narrative data. Case studies also found most SPOs have developed job descriptions for SWIS workers and SWIS coordinators.

Policy guidance highlights that SWIS may include activities under NAARS, I&O, ERS and CC streams. Guidance on activities under these streams does not specify required or core features of SWIS; instead, noting which activities SWIS programming "may include", but not providing an exhaustive list. Key informants praised SWIS guidance for its flexibility, but felt it introduces ambiguity in differentiating SWIS from other settlement services, including IRCC-funded settlement services.

Data review highlighted ambiguity in guidance for reporting on activities. For example, more than half of activity type fields under the CC stream between 2017 and 2020 were coded as "other", rather than a drop-down option for community-based[12] or targeted matching and networking[13] activities. Moreover, open-ended activity type data are not collected systematically, resulting in difficulties conducting qualitative analysis (e.g., identifying SWIS CC best practices) and quantitative analyses (e.g., comparing activities at different SPOs).

Similarly, as SPOs may report data, in part or in whole under different settlement streams (e.g., I&O versus CC), there are challenges in comparing differences in delivery between SPOs, and assessing the extent of duplication between CC and other settlement activities.

## Duplication in SWIS

Case studies found evidence of duplication between SWIS and non-settlement services provided by SPOs and school boards. For example, SPOs deliver non-SWIS services which target newcomer youth and have similar content to SWIS activities (e.g., non-SWIS multicultural school orientation, assisting communication between the home and school, facilitating inter-cultural understanding for families and school staff). Other examples included: schools and SPOs having overlapping roles and responsibilities between SWIS and non-SWIS staff (e.g., other multicultural staff, student support workers, cultural role models), as well as SPOs providing SWIS activities that mirror services already offered in some schools (e.g., SWIS homework clubs, tutoring sessions, after-school activities).

While some interviewees noted similarities between roles of SWIS workers and school staff (e.g., guidance counsellors), they felt SWIS workers provide more specialized services and have greater awareness of newcomer needs. Interviewees also raised that SWIS duplication helps fill gaps for rural areas, which may not have constant access to specialized services (e.g., social workers). Overall, while duplication was found, interviewees noted duplication is not problematic when services are needed.

While some SPOs have MOUs or partnerships with the schools they serve, not all SPOs do. In the absence of bilateral agreements, it is challenging to assess the extent to which SPOs may have staff with overlapping roles, or schools may be providing services similar to SWIS. Evidence from the SWIS worker survey suggests that SWIS workers often provide services outside of their job description. Of the 81% of SWIS workers surveyed who indicated encountering challenges in their work, 49% said providing services outside their job description was a challenge.

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[12] Including events pertaining to culture or history, field trips, neighbourhood days, sports/recreation events and "other community events".

[13] Including conversation circles, networking activities, targeted matching (i.e., Canada Connects), youth leadership projects and other regular group activities.

Different delivery models

The evaluation identified advantages and disadvantages associated with different SWIS delivery models. As individual SPOs work under different operating contexts (e.g., as school boards, as community organizations) and constraints (e.g., collective agreements, funding realities), advantages and disadvantages vary.

Itinerant services and commuting

Itinerant services enhance access to SWIS, especially for clients in rural/remote areas and clients who cannot meet SWIS workers at school. However, itinerant services require SWIS workers to commute, which limits the number of clients they see and their time providing services. Commuting can be a burden for SWIS workers who speak languages not commonly spoken by their colleagues, as they already tend to have high workloads. 58% of surveyed SWIS workers reported working mainly at one location and also providing itinerant services. Of these SWIS workers, challenges were reported with resources/funding (63%), workload (55%), and time constraints (50%).

Summer provision and layoffs

Summer layoffs for SWIS workers may save money, but having summer staff allows clients to interact with the same SWIS workers consistently, rather than requiring them to make new relationships with other SPO staff or other SPOs. Some SWIS workers felt that when SWIS is not provided in summer months, their workload (and client issues) are backlogged until the fall.

Language of services

Case studies found some francophone schools conduct all activities in French. As a result, non-French services, including translation and interpretation are not provided in schools, which necessitates referring clients to other SPOs.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)

Some SPOs develop MOUs or agreements with school boards they serve. Agreements can be beneficial as they may cover the scope of SWIS worker responsibilities, establish in-kind contributions and encourage information sharing between parties. Having clear roles and responsibilities and sharing information on client services helps prevent duplicate service delivery (e.g., multiple needs assessments) and improves the client experience. One advantage of school boards providing SWIS is that there is no need for such a partnership agreement.

Office space

As SWIS is primarily provided in schools, delivery is contingent on schools providing in-school office space, allowing SWIS workers in classrooms, or having office locations near schools. While policy guidance notes schools provide space as in-kind contributions, some interviewees reported not all schools provide space, and not all school staff allow SWIS workers in their classes, or allow students to leave to talk with SWIS workers. In the absence of appropriate spaces, SWIS workers are sometimes required to discuss sensitive issues with clients in public school locations.

Privacy/confidentiality

Community-based SPOs and school boards do not always share client information. Not sharing information preserves client privacy, but creates a risk that not all newcomers will be aware of SWIS. Moreover, interviewees noted clients may need to have new (i.e., multiple) needs assessments conducted if they move to a new school, which may disrupt service continuity and/or negatively impact client experience.

Serving temporary residents

Some SWIS workers reported providing services to large volumes of ineligible clients, such as TRs. While serving TRs increases the availability of services to different populations, and current guidance allows serving TRs due to in-kind contributions of schools, some SWIS workers and SPO staff reported concerns of "burn-out" and a reduced ability to serve eligible clients. Some SPOs also reported confusion over whether they could serve ineligible clients.

Centralized referral procedures

At some SPOs, newcomer clients register for school at centralized referral hubs. Centralized referral procedures ensure all newcomers in school are aware of and have access to SWIS, whereas schools without such procedures may rely on third-party referrals, or word of mouth. Some interviewees felt centralized referral procedures may not be feasible for smaller SPOs.

Finding 6: SWIS workers played a key role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily through the provision of online services and by providing and promoting access to technology.

SWIS workers and COVID-19

The evaluation found SWIS workers played many key roles in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and meeting the diverse needs of clients. In particular, case studies highlighted the importance of SWIS workers in providing online services for clients and promoting/providing access to technology.

SWIS workers in focus groups noted that their close relationships with students allowed them to identify technology issues for schools, such as who did not have access to internet and who did not have reliable technology (e.g., laptops, tablets) to participate in class. Also, some SPOs reported requesting and receiving funding amendments to procure technology for clients to ensure their participation in school.

SWIS services were not exclusively provided online throughout the pandemic, as some services continued on school grounds or in other locations. Case studies highlighted instances where SWIS workers were deemed "essential" by school governance as schools were re-opened and in other cases where school occupancy was limited. Deeming SWIS staff essential in these circumstances further speaks to the need for and value of SWIS programming.

Some interviewees felt that COVID-19 created new workloads for SWIS workers, for example in setting up parents/guardians and their children with technology and assisting communication between schools and families rather than more traditional SWIS services. Need for SWIS may have also been increased in areas with less access to internet.

Online service delivery

As the department moves forward with digital modernization, the pandemic has provided a unique opportunity to consider the value of online service delivery in the context of SWIS design. Interviewees underscored the value of online service delivery for increasing access to SWIS in rural areas, and in schools that offer itinerant services only. Online services reduce the need for SWIS workers to commute, thereby increasing the amount of time workers have to deliver services. This is of particular benefit for SWIS staff who speak languages not spoken by their colleagues, and who may be needed in multiple locations on any given day.

Case studies also provided valuable insights into the strengths and challenges of online service delivery. Case studies highlighted that while more clients can attend SWIS-related sessions in an online environment, some workers found the online environment to be less engaging. Others found that the switch to online services lead to higher workloads as they are accessible to more clients than when they operate in a physical space. While online service removes a travel barrier for some clients, workers indicated that there are still major technology barriers to accessing services, such as low digital literacy or no access to computers and/or the internet.

Though technology barriers exist, case studies suggested that client capacity in using technology has increased as a result of necessity during the pandemic. While this increase in capacity cannot be attributed to SWIS services being moved online, many clients increased their use of online technology as aspects of life such as ordering things online or calling a store for curbside pickup became essential.

Interviewees also noted that online service provision provides clients with a virtual "safe space" to access SWIS, for example for clients who may not be able to access SWIS in person in cases of domestic abuse. Conversely, interviewees also noted that when SPOs/schools were closed, some individuals lost the availability of a physical "safe space" for accessing services. Taken together, the evaluation highlighted importance of offering physical and virtual options for clients.

Training and tools for SWIS workers

Negotiation guidelines for Settlement Program agreements cover training and PD, including tuition/registration, employee salaries and travel costs. Guides for funding recipients indicate SPOs are responsible for ensuring staff have tools and training to support a respectful, safe and secure environment. All regions are supported by umbrella organizations that may offer training on a variety of topics relevant for SWIS workers[14], [15].

Some key informants noted there are other organizations that develop tools/guidance for SWIS workers, which vary by SPO and region[16]. Case study SPOs also reported having coordinator and management positions that develop tools, training and guidance. Job shadowing was identified as a common practice among case studies—where SWIS workers are paired with more experienced colleagues for a set time frame (e.g., 2-3 weeks). Many SPOs, especially those with long-established SWIS initiatives, indicated they have manuals for onboarding new staff, which outline roles and responsibilities, standard procedures, and service types.

Key informants who worked at school boards felt that their employees are better positioned for training as they have free access to training and PD opportunities offered by the school. This type of training may also be beneficial as it is aligned with regular school professional development days, minimizing the time SWIS workers are unavailable for their clients. In contrast, anecdotal evidence suggests SWIS workers in community-based organizations may be more informed about settlement services available outside of schools.

In general, interviewed SWIS staff spoke positively about the training they were offered/received and the funding arrangements for PD. When asked about their satisfaction with training, nearly all SWIS workers surveyed reported the training they received was useful to at least a moderate extent (97%).

Nevertheless, many SWIS workers who received training also desired additional training (78%). Some workers felt that training could be improved by being adapted to SWIS contexts rather than being general in nature (e.g., general settlement). Responses from the SPO survey also highlighted rural/urban differences in PD availability, as well as a need for training on subjects like trauma-informed practice, cultural sensitivity and community settlement services.

Figure 18: Training types of SWIS workers who reported receiving training

Training type	%
Online training	92%
Training from their organization	85%
Training in cross-cultural sensitivity	71%
Training from a school/school board	53%
Training in child development	30%
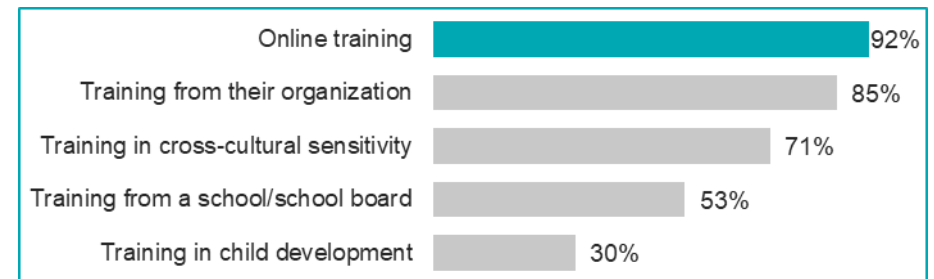
[Source: SWIS worker survey]

Figure 19: Additional training desired for SWIS workers who received other training

Training type	%
Online training	64%
Training in child development	61%
Training in cross-cultural sensitivity	49%
Training from a school/school board	43%
Training from their organization	36%
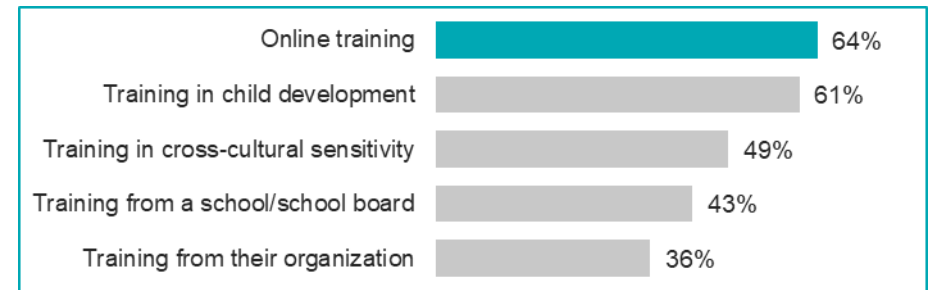
[Source: SWIS worker survey]

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[14] E.g., cultural sensitivity, barriers for newcomers, social inclusion

[15] Interviewees in smaller provinces noted more of their PD budget is allocated for travel as offerings are not always available in province.

[16] For example, in Ontario there is the Community Integration Network and the Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions.

Responsiveness and effectiveness of SWIS services

Finding 8: SWIS services are perceived to be useful and responsive to the needs of clients - contributing to the integration of newcomer students and their families by increasing their knowledge of the education system; preparing students for school; increasing involvement in schooling; and referring clients to community and other services.

Responsiveness of SWIS

Interviewees felt in-school services are designed to be responsive, as SWIS workers can handle issues in schools, as they arise, rather than after the fact at a SPO location. Likewise, it is convenient for parents and guardians to receive services, for example, when picking up children from school, rather than making a separate trip. SWIS services are therefore responsive both with respect to location and timeliness of services.

As SWIS staff have relationships with school staff and, in some cases, work in school boards, they are well-positioned to respond to the in-school barriers newcomers face. SWIS workers are able to adapt their services to the needs of clients and school boards. For example, providing itinerant services helps meet the needs of clients in rural and remote communities, while also allowing school boards to extend the reach of SWIS services to communities with small newcomer populations.

Nevertheless, some surveyed SWIS staff felt there are gaps in the SWIS services provided to newcomer students and parents/guardians (44%) — of these, the most common gaps were in service bridging (56%), outreach to newly-arrived families (40%) and short-term counselling (30%).

SWIS worker perspectives on usefulness

Some interviewees noted that the lack of quantitative data on SWIS makes reporting on results largely anecdotal. However, a wealth of survey data shows clients perceive SWIS to be responsive and useful. When asked whether SWIS services meet the needs of clients, nearly all SWIS workers felt SWIS was meeting the needs of both students (97%) and their parents/guardians (98%).

Parent/guardian perspectives on usefulness

In the short-term, SWIS is intended to familiarize parents and guardians with the school system. The client survey found 75% of parents/guardian respondents felt the in-school settlement services they received improved their knowledge of education in Canada, to at least a moderate extent. SWIS also helped increase parent/guardian knowledge of a variety of education topics.

Figure 20: Parent/guardian ratings of increased knowledge as a result of SWIS, by topic

Topic	Percentage
Registering for school	75%
Curriculum (course requirements)	67%
Report cards	67%
School transportation	64%
School involvement	63%
Homework requirements	63%
School services and supports	62%
School supplies	62%
After-school/extracurricular activities	60%
Career opportunities	51%
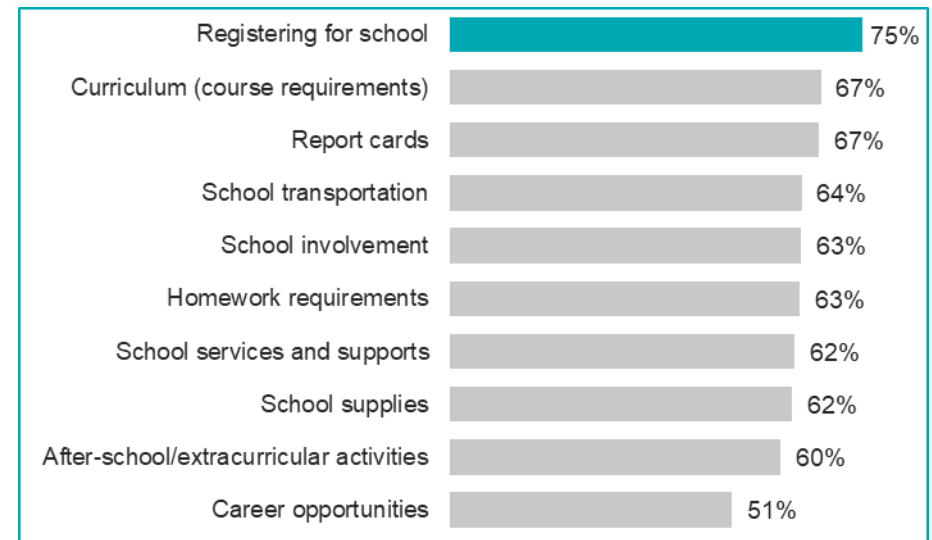
[Source: SWIS client survey]

Student perspectives on usefulness

Former students largely held positive perspectives on the usefulness of SWIS. Of former students who participated in an event aimed at preparing for/learning more about school, 97% felt the event was at least somewhat helpful. Similarly, of former students who received help from a school settlement worker, 99% felt the "help and support provided by the school settlement worker" was at least somewhat useful.

Current students also held positive perspectives on the usefulness of SWIS. Of current students who participated in an event aimed at preparing for/learning more about school, 99% felt the event was at least somewhat helpful. Moreover, of current students who received help from a school settlement worker, 99% felt the "help and support provided by the school settlement worker" was at least somewhat useful.

Figure 21: Help type, of current students who reported receiving SWIS

Help type	Percent
Understanding/following school rules	72%
Information on extra-curricular activities	69%
Support to deal with conflicts at school	60%
Reading/understanding class schedules	58%
Information on how to get to school	53%
Using a lock and locker at school	51%
Connecting to classes using technology	49%
Reading and understanding report cards	48%
Support dealing with issues at home	36%
How to find a job	36%
Translation/interpretation	34%
Other support or help	5%

[Source: SWIS client survey]

Figure 22: Current students reporting increased knowledge by topic

Topic	Percent
Reading/understanding class schedules	79%
Reading and understanding report cards	78%
Using locks and lockers	77%
Understanding/following school rules	77%
Getting help with homework/studying	72%
Doing homework	70%
Dealing with teasing/bullying at school	69%
Making friends	68%
Participating in extra-curricular activities	67%
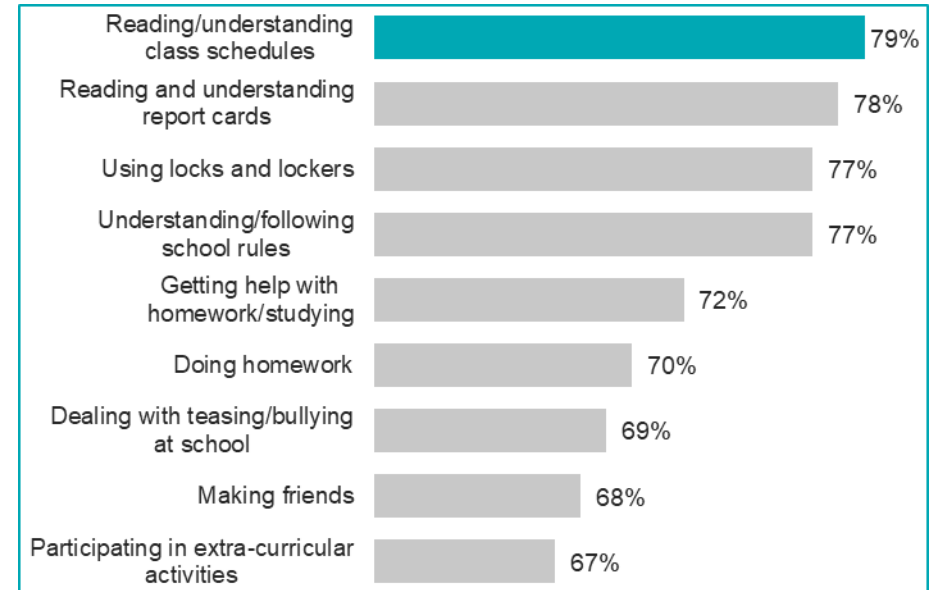
[Source: SWIS client survey]

SWIS services for school staff

IRCC does not collect data on services provided to school staff, which leaves results stories largely anecdotal. Nevertheless, all case study SPOs reported providing support and/or training to school staff, along with most SWIS workers (80%) and SWIS SPOs (86%) surveyed. Most commonly, these supports included conflict resolution/mediation, interpretation services for client meetings with the school, cross-cultural training, and information sessions on SWIS services and roles. Interviewees felt that training and support for school staff enhances awareness of newcomer issues and helps ensure staff cultural competencies.

Referrals

The Profile of SWIS Activities presents data on referrals made through NAARS and I&O streams. Most parents/guardians surveyed who reported receiving referrals felt the referrals and linkages they received from their SWIS SPO were useful to at least a moderate extent (85%).

Figure 23: Top seven referrals made through SWIS-flagged or in-school NAARS

Knowledge of education in Canada	79,949
Knowledge of community/government services	69,571
Access to local IRCC community services	68,688
Community services (non-IRCC)	46,536
Improved language skills	32,590
Education/Skills Development (non-IRCC)	27,911
Level of community involvement	24,495
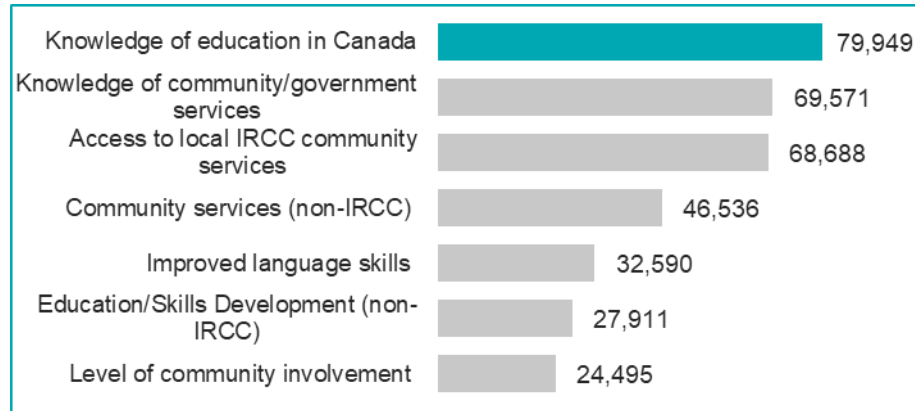
[Source: iCARE]

Figure 24: Top five referrals made through SWIS-flagged or in-school I&O

Education	251,090
Community	176,740
Information	169,144
Language	68,857
Health	68,181
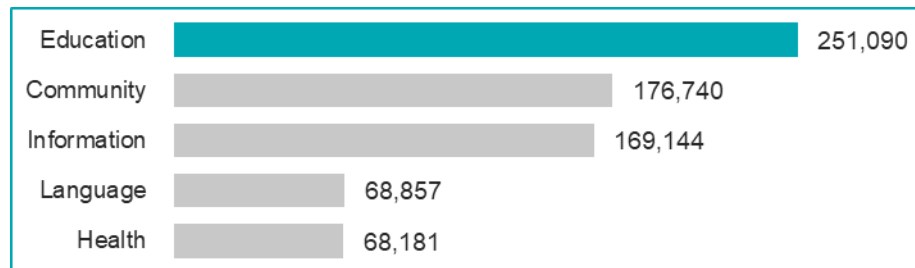
[Source: iCARE]

Engagement

Another desired outcome of SWIS is engagement in the school system, both for children and youth, as well as their parents and guardians.

Nearly all SWIS worker survey respondents reported that SWIS contributed to at least a moderate extent with respect to the integration of newcomer students in schools (99%), the integration of newcomer families in society (97%) and school inclusiveness (96%).

Parents and guardians who responded to the survey indicated that the services they received from their SWIS SPOs helped them engage in and get involved with school activities at home (60%), and at their children's' schools (64%) to at least a moderate extent.

Finding 9: Evidence suggests newcomer students who receive SWIS have positive views about their school and their place within it. Further, many SWIS clients reported graduating and having aspirations to continue their education.

Academic success and aspirations

One of the desired long-term outcomes of SWIS programming is for newcomers to experience a sense of belonging that supports educational attainment, and be provided with full information about future education and career opportunities.

Many former students who responded to the survey reported having graduated from high school (72%). Moreover, of former students who graduated, nearly three-quarters indicated they had attended some form of post-secondary education (74%). Of current students who responded to the survey, 40% indicated aspiring to obtain a university degree in the future.

Figure 25: Highest reported level of education of former students who indicated graduating
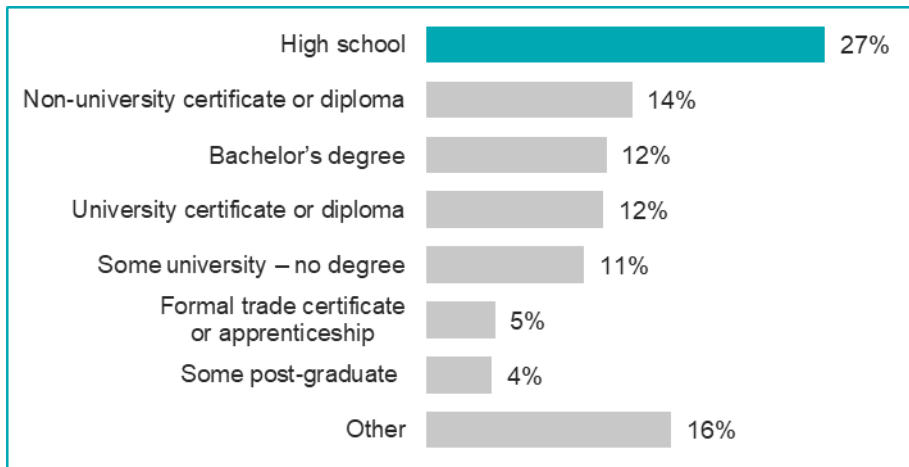
[Source: SWIS client survey]

Dropping out of school

Of current students who responded to the survey, 7% reported having dropped out of school for at least one week. The most common reasons for dropping out included needing to work (25%), being bullied or teased at school (21%) and being bored at school (19%).

A further 8% of current students reported having considered dropping out, with the most common reasons including having trouble achieving good academic grades (48%), not liking school (40%), and being bored at school (34%).

Client perspectives on school

When asked how they felt about school when they first started, 15% of current students reported not liking school, at least somewhat. When asked how they currently felt about school, the proportion of students reporting at least somewhat disliking school dropped to 10%. Furthermore, nearly half of current students surveyed reported liking school more than when they first started[17] (46%).

Outside of liking/disliking school, the survey identified other positive perspectives including the majority of current students agreeing they fit in at school (90%), and feeling they are doing well with respect to schoolwork (73%). Moreover, only 3% of current clients surveyed felt they were performing below average with their schoolwork.

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[17] Excludes those students who held very positive views of school when they first started.

Peer leaders

One promising practice identified through key informant interviews and case studies is "peer leaders". Peer leaders are immigrant students who have experienced many of the same challenges and barriers as students coming into the school system, who act as positive role models for newcomers entering the Canadian education system. SPO staff interviewed felt that having peer leaders as role models shows new students that they too have the potential to become leaders within the school.

In general, case study SPOs reported providing peer leaders with training on leadership and team-building. Once trained, peer leaders help with and organize activities and orientation events for students.

Some of the SWIS staff interviewed reported that they themselves were also former peer leaders, and some SPOs reported hiring SWIS workers from these groups where possible. Peer leadership also has the benefit of providing volunteer opportunities for newcomer youth while simultaneously lessening the burden on SWIS staff (e.g., conducting orientation activities).

As IRCC does not mandate core SWIS requirements, including orientation and peer leadership, peer leaders are not defined by internal guidance. As such, protocols around peer leadership and training for peer leaders are at the discretion of each individual SPO. Of students surveyed, who had participated in orientation events (i.e., an event to prepare for and learn more about school), nearly half of both current students (46%) and former students (47%) indicated they became peer leaders after participating in the orientation event.

Clients surveyed also held positive views about the usefulness of peer leaders from whom they had received help. Of students surveyed who received help from a peer leader, 95% of current students and 99% of former students felt the peer leader was at least somewhat helpful.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

The report presented findings of the evaluation of IRCC's SWIS initiative. The evaluation was conducted to fulfil requirements under the Treasury Board's Policy on Results and was identified as part of the Departmental Evaluation Planning exercise. The evaluation focussed primarily on the implementation, design and effectiveness of SWIS, including regional SWIS delivery. The evaluation also included a GBA+ lens, as well as considerations of COVID-19 impacts on SWIS design and delivery.

Overall, the evaluation found a clear and demonstrable need for SWIS. Newcomer youth, children and their parents/guardians need school-based settlement services to integrate fully into Canadian society, as well as the Canadian education system. SWIS also provides newcomer students and their parents/guardians with a convenient access point for settlement services. Furthermore, the Government of Canada has an evident role in providing SWIS, despite education being a provincial/territorial responsibility, as the Federal Government is responsible for newcomer integration.

With respect to managing SWIS, the evaluation found unique delivery models allow SPOs to adapt their programming for regional, provincial/territorial and local priorities. However, this flexibility creates challenges in understanding initiative performance, for example in comparing different SPOs, or understanding what activities work best for whom, and under what conditions.

Despite data limitations, the evaluation found clients, including students, families and school staff perceive SWIS services to be useful and responsive to their needs. Evidence suggests that SWIS is contributing to increased knowledge, involvement and performance in the education system. SWIS is also useful for referring clients to other settlement services needed on their integration journeys, and for enhancing cultural understanding on the part of school staff.

Thus, while evaluation findings generally showed that SWIS was making a positive contribution to newcomer settlement and integration, there are still significant gaps in our understanding of the various delivery models and the effectiveness of these activities for clients. With changes to initiative design to better define SWIS, and improved data collection, IRCC would be better positioned to monitor and report on SWIS outcomes. To this end, the evaluation puts forward three recommendations.

Recommendation 1

SWIS is a cross-component initiative, meaning that programming may include components under different settlement funding streams. SWIS activities may include information and orientation, outreach to newly arrived families, needs assessment and action planning, service bridging, supported referrals, casework, non-therapeutic counselling, cultural understanding, interpretation, home visits, community outreach and advocacy.

Policy guidance on activities under settlement streams does not specify required or core features of SWIS, nor does guidance contain an exhaustive list of activities. While broad policy guidance is praised for its flexibility, it results in inconsistent activity offerings across Canada and a lack of common understanding of which activities constitute SWIS.

The evaluation identified extensive variability between SPOs in how NAARS, I&O and CC activities are being delivered, including the comprehensiveness of needs assessments and the frequency of SWIS interventions. Newly developed policies that better balance flexibility with standardization would help contribute to a higher level of consistency across Canada in how services are delivered, as well as help identify SWIS activities more clearly, supporting stronger data collection and sharing of best practices.

Recommendation 1: IRCC should confirm and implement a common definition of SWIS with core services/ activities supported by clear policy/guidelines.

Recommendation 2

SWIS faces issues in data collection. While the department has undertaken efforts to flag SWIS activities in iCARE, current measures do not adequately distinguish SWIS services from other settlement services. Similarly, efforts to identify SWIS-serving SPOs in GCS have not been implemented fully. Until IRCC executes a reliable strategy to identify SWIS activities and SWIS-serving organizations, the department will struggle to report on performance in a quantitative or systematic manner.

The department also needs to ensure collected data are meaningful and entered consistently. The majority of SWIS Community Connections activities in iCARE include insufficient information to understand what interventions took place. Similarly, when different SPOs conduct the same activity, there is a high level of variability in data entry and reporting. The evaluation also identified confusion and variability over which activities need to be entered in iCARE, and for which client populations. IRCC must therefore ensure policies around data collection are well understood by IRCC and SPO staff.

Lastly, the department does not collect quantitative data on services provided to school staff (e.g., teachers, administrations). As school staff are a key client group, with defined outcomes, IRCC needs to ensure data is collected for this group.

Enhancing data collection will ensure IRCC is well-positioned to conduct stronger assessments of SWIS performance, in support of evidence-based policy decisions, improving SWIS design, and delivering more effective services.

Recommendation 2: IRCC should:

(A) Develop and implement a strategy to clearly capture the core SWIS activities and services and SPOs delivering them, identified as a result of Recommendation 1, in iCARE and GCS; and

(B) Implement and disseminate updated policies and guidance for SWIS-related data entry procedures.

Recommendation 3

The evaluation identified instances of duplication between SWIS activities and other services in IRCC's settlement suite, as well as other services offered in the community and offered by schools. While duplication is not inherently bad (for example where there is great demand for services), there are challenges in understanding the extent of duplication and whether it is addressing a need.

IRCC does not require funding recipients to establish agreements with the school boards they serve, nor does IRCC have agreements with all school boards. As a result, it is difficult to determine how the services offered by schools compare with the services offered by IRCC, creating a risk of overlapping roles and responsibilities. Moreover, as IRCC does not mandate information sharing with schoolboards (or SWIS SPOs) for clients served, it is not possible to quantify the existing level of duplication, nor attribute successful education and settlement outcomes to participation in SWIS activities.

Another challenge facing SWIS is provision of services to ineligible clients. Under current policy guidance, no clients are denied services, regardless of their immigration status. For other settlement services, clients are obligated to provide unique immigration identifiers to receive services, but under SWIS clients are not required to do so as a result of the in-kind contributions of schools. Consequently, it can be difficult to assess the impact of serving ineligible clients on SWIS worker workload.

Consistent reporting on SWIS clients and activities would improve IRCC's ability to assess and attribute client outcomes to SWIS, and understand the trade-offs of in-kind contributions and serving ineligible clients.

Recommendation 3: IRCC should:

(A) Explore SWIS policy changes to ensure more standardized information sharing with IRCC on SWIS clients and activities; and

(B) Review and clarify the department's position, policies and procedures around providing SWIS services to TRs to ensure a consistent approach across service provider organizations.

Annex A: Settlement Program logic model

Management & Engagement

Program Delivery

Activities

Outputs

Outcomes

Immediate Settlement

Intermediate Early & Late Adaptation

Ultimate Integration

Departmental Services

Program Management and Engagement

- Accountability Framework
- Policies
- Program design and implementation strategies
- Pilot projects (includes SDI)
- Communication products
- Calls for Proposals
- Contribution Agreements
- Project monitoring
- Performance reports
- Functional guidance
- Private sector engagement
- Regulatory body engagement
- OGD engagement
- PT partnerships
- Grant to Quebec
- International engagement

Consistent and responsive Settlement Program delivery

Enabling Services

Provision of support services

- Care for Newcomer Children
- Transportation
- Translation
- Interpretation
- Crisis counselling
- Provisions for clients with disabilities

Assessment of needs and referrals

- Needs assessments
- Settlement plans
- Referrals to IRCC and non-IRCC settlement services
- Linkages in Information & Orientation and Employment-Related Services
- Language assessments and referrals

Access to IRCC-funded settlement services is facilitated

Increase understanding of client settlement needs and appropriate linkages to other services

Clients access services that meet their needs

Direct Services

Provision of information

- Group, individual & family orientation
- Provision of information in Language Training
- Provision of information in Community Connections activities

Provision of language services

- Formal language training classes
- French/English
- Literacy
- General
- Finding a job
- Citizenship focused
- Informal language learning sessions

Provision of employment-related services

- Work placements
- Networking
- Mentoring
- Employment counselling
- Resume matching/screening
- Preparation for licensure
- Employment-specific language training

Building community connections

- Targeted matching with established newcomers or Canadians
- Cross-cultural interactions and related activities

Clients increase knowledge of life in Canada

Clients improve official language skills

Clients acquire knowledge, skills, and connections to prepare for the Canadian labour market

Clients increase participation in communities and social networks

Clients make informed decisions about life in Canada

Clients use an official language to function in Canadian society

Clients participate in the Canadian labour market

Clients are connected to communities and institutions

Indirect Services

Building community connections

- Individual Canadians' engagement
- Private sector support delivery of settlement services
- Community partnerships
- Employment partnerships
- Other public institutions (schools, police, etc.)

Sector capacity building

- Tool development
- Competency development training
- Umbrella organizations
- Conferences
- Best practice activities
- Outcome measurement capacity

Partners deliver responsive and coordinated settlement and community services

Communities foster welcoming environment for immigrants

Successfully integrated and settled clients benefit Canada

34

Logic model – accessible text version

The logic model aims to describe how the Settlement Program is intended to meet its policy objectives. The logic model is divided into Management and Engagement and Program Delivery pillars.

Activities and outputs

Program Activities may be delivered pre or post-arrival in Canada. Pre-Arrival Settlement Services are offered either in-person (in-country) or online (web-based) to eligible clients before they arrive in Canada.

Activities in Management and Engagement are comprised of Departmental Services (i.e., Program Management and Engagement). Outputs under Program Management relate to all required functions to manage Program. It permits continuous improvement of programming, including accountability frameworks, policies, planning (regional, national and international), program design, implementation, development of pilot projects for service delivery improvement (SDI), communication products, management of contribution agreements, monitoring (activities and financial), performance reports, engagement and partnerships, training, support and guidance. This includes membership in the International Organization for Migration and Migration Policy Development Program research grants to various international organizations. These functions are either led by or shared between IRCC NHQ, regional and local offices and encompass all salary, operating and maintenance and some grants and contribution funding.

Activities under the Program Delivery pillar include Enabling Services (i.e., provision of support services and assessment of needs and referrals), Direct Services (provision of information and orientation, provision of language services, provision of employment-related services, and building community connections) and Indirect Services (building community connections and sector building capacity).

With respect to Enabling Services, outputs under Provision of support services include services such as childcare for newcomer children, transportation, interpretation, translation, crisis counseling, and provisions for clients with disabilities. These barrier-reducing services are always provided in conjunction with the assessment of needs and referrals or another direct service. Outputs under Assessment of needs and referrals include Pre- and post-arrival services that provide formal reviews of client needs across a broad spectrum of settlement areas, provide assessment of client language abilities and provide referrals to settlement and community-based services. Eligible services include needs assessments and reassessments, the development of personalized settlement plans, language assessments, and referrals to and non-IRCC settlement services.

With respect to Direct Services, outputs under Provision of information and orientation are comprised of services that provide clients with information about Canada and the community in which they intend to settle. The services also help clients to develop the life skills they need to integrate into Canadian society (and Francophone minority communities in particular the case of French-speaking clients) and prepare for Canadian citizenship. Eligible services include the information and orientation sessions on a variety of topics in group, individual and family settings, port of entry services, dissemination of information products (electronic or print), promotion and outreach provision of information in language training, and the provision of information in community connections. Outputs under Provision of language services are comprised of services that support clients in improving official language skills required for functioning in Canadian society. Eligible services include formal language training classes with a variety of focuses and informal language learning sessions. Outputs under Provision of employment-related services are comprised of services that directly equip clients with employment-related skills and support in accessing the labour market. These services include work placements, networking, mentoring, employment counselling, resume matching/screening, preparation for licensure or certification and employment-specific language training. Outputs under Building community connections are comprised of services that help to connect clients with communities, public institutions, and community organizations. These services include targeted matching with established newcomers or Canadians, and cross-cultural interactions and related activities. These services also provide opportunities for partners, volunteers, local community members (including immigrants) to be actively engaged in settlement and integration programming.

With respect to Indirect Services, outputs under Building community connections are comprised of services that provide opportunities for partners, volunteers, and local community members (including immigrants and refugees) to be actively engaged in settlement and integration programming. Indirect services in Francophone minority communities also contribute to increasing capacity of those communities to welcome and integrate French-speaking immigrants and refugees. Outputs under Sector capacity building are comprised of services to help ensure that service provision to clients is consistent, innovative and coordinated. Some indirect services endeavor to engage partners and stakeholders such as employers, community organizations, and other levels of government and public institutions in fostering connections with newcomers and encouraging the participation and contribution of immigrants in Canadian society. Eligible initiatives include development and sharing of materials, tools and best practices, competency development (including training activities), umbrella organization funding, conferences, best practice activities, outcome measurement capacity, community and sector-level planning, partnership development and support, support to local employers to assist them in accessing foreign-trained immigrants and refugees, research aimed at improving service delivery to immigrants and refugees, support to regulatory bodies and apprenticeship authorities and/or related partners, organizations or partnerships to facilitate the credential assessment process for immigrants and refugees, cultural sensitivity initiatives for professionals and partners outside of the settlement sector, and development, management and dissemination of content, standards and curricula.

Outcomes

Immediate Outcomes

As a result of the outputs produced by the IRCC Settlement Program, it is expected that the program management and engagement activities that take place within IRCC are in place to create frameworks, partnerships, and funding agreements that effectively support consistent and responsive Settlement Program delivery. In terms of the immediate outcomes of clients, the Settlement Program is expected to produce the outcomes within one year of the beginning of the client's first service (whether in Canada or overseas). In this early settlement phase, outcomes of enabling services are focused on facilitating access to IRCC-funded settlement services. SPOs can provide various support services such as care for newcomer children, interpretation or translation, transportation, crisis counselling or provisions for clients with disabilities in order to ensure access to IRCC funded settlement services is facilitated. SPOs conduct assessments of settlement and language needs and provide referrals or linkages to increase understanding of client settlement needs and appropriate linkages to other services.

Immediate outcomes of direct services are focused on increasing the knowledge of clients. Depending on needs identified, a client could then receive one or more direct settlement service(s). Services involving the provision of information such as workshops or one-on-one services are expected to help clients increase knowledge of life in Canada, specifically regarding topics such as: education, rights and responsibilities, and important documents. Clients can also access language training in either English or French to help clients improve their official language skills. If clients are ready to get a job, SPOs provide services for employment such as work placements, networking, or client-mentor matching that are expected to help clients acquire knowledge, skills, and connections to prepare for the Canadian labour market. The final direct settlement service is about building community connections for the client, to help clients increase participation in communities and social networks.

In addition to direct services, IRCC provides funding for various partnership initiatives like LIPs or RIFS within communities, and capacity building and conferences within the settlement sector. The expected outcome of this work is that partners deliver responsive and coordinated settlement and community services for the newcomer community in Canada. This approach helps to form the two-way street of immigrant integration in that communities are welcoming to newcomers, support their full participation, and help build social capital.

Intermediate Outcomes

The intermediate outcomes of the Settlement Program focus on the adaptation stage of the integration continuum and have a time period of between 1 and 5 years since first accessing IRCC funded settlement services (whether in Canada or overseas). As time spent in Canada increases, so do the factors which could influence a client's integration process, including friends and family, employment, children, or other community services. At this level, any or all of the direct services and immediate results could be expected to result in any of the identified intermediate outcomes. Results will be further divided into early (1<3 years) and late (≥3-5 years) adaptation periods in order to better capture the progress and nuance in a client's integration journey. Results at the intermediate level focus on measuring a client's behaviour as a result of the knowledge gained at the immediate level. Expected outcomes of IRCC's Settlement Program at the intermediate level are that clients access services that meet their needs, clients make informed decisions about life in Canada, clients use an official language to function in Canadian society, clients participate in the Canadian labour market, and clients are connected to communities and institutions. As an intermediate result of the two-way street progression, IRCC intends that partnerships and capacity building activities will lead to communities fostering a welcoming environment for immigrants by adapting their services to immigrants, changing their practices and increasing inclusiveness.

Ultimate Outcome

While the IRCC Settlement Program is intended to support immigrant settlement and adaptation toward longer-term integration, client outcomes at the ultimate level (five or more years after beginning of first service) are attributable to a variety of factors including social and economic trends in Canadian society. In earlier time frames, the Settlement Program focuses on first knowledge gains and then resulting behaviour on the part of both the clients and Canadian communities. The ultimate expected result of IRCC's settlement program is that Successfully integrated and settled clients benefit Canada.

Annex B: Additional desired outcomes for SWIS

In addition to the overall expected outcomes for the Settlement Program (see Annex A), additional short and long-term outcomes for SWIS have been developed by Settlement and Integration Sector (SIS) as a general guide for programming. Outcomes are broken down by client group (i.e., newcomer student, newcomer parents/guardians, and teachers/school staff). Of note, outcomes are not fully operationalized or tracked.

Short-term outcomes

- Newcomer students are engaged in the school system; they receive information and access school programs, after-school activities, summer employment, and community resources.
- Parents/guardians are familiar with the school system and Canadian culture; they are involved in school activities, are aware of community and government resources, supported in conflict resolution and connected to services and networks within the school and community.
- Teachers and school staff are culturally competent; they are aware of community resources that can meet the needs of newcomers and offer support accordingly.

Long-term outcomes

- Newcomer students experience a sense of belonging that supports their educational attainment and they have full information about future education and career opportunities.
- Parents/guardians are integrated into all aspects of Canadian society and empowered to support their children's academic and career endeavors.
- Teachers and school staff have the capacity to support integration and the school culture adapts to promote inclusion.

Annex C: Stakeholder engagement

Assessing need for SWIS

While IRCC has mechanisms in place to assess SWIS proposals, CA recipients are responsible for identifying which schools and school boards need services. CFPs for Settlement Program funding outline general guidelines, for example that services must target eligible clients (e.g., PRs), include eligible project activities, align with at least one Settlement Program Theme, and align with at least one immediate and intermediate program outcome. CFPs also include regional priorities.

Once proposals have been approved in principle, IRCC's Grants and Contributions (G&C) manual outlines steps for IRCC assessment of proposals and preparation of CAs, including: identifying priorities from the current Call for Proposals; determining IRCC staffing resources and operating budget; engaging with PTs and stakeholders on local, regional and other needs; identifying whether existing programs/services are responsive to newcomer needs; and Identifying service gaps.

IRCC assessment teams rate proposals on links to settlement streams, priorities, potential for success, value for money and risk factors. A review committee of subject matter experts and Director Generals then weight recommended proposals by factors like location, comparability, duplication, service coverage and funding sufficiency.

There are no standardized requirements for how CA recipients should assess need for SWIS services, although policy guidance for the CC stream highlights SPOs "are best placed to determine the most suitable approach to addressing the needs of newcomers" and that these approaches depend on client, organizational and community factors (e.g., individual/familial situation, staff resources, availability of other settlement services).

Case studies found most SPOs consider which schools/neighbourhoods have large newcomer populations, as well as vulnerability factors (e.g., number of refugees) when allocating resources. SPOs decide which locations SWIS workers should be assigned, as well as how many locations a SWIS worker should be assigned. SPOs may also adapt placements as needed. Some SPOs also reported considering which elementary schools "feed" into secondary schools, to ensure continuity of a SWIS worker through a student/family's education and some interviewees noted SPOs also consider school registration data when available, as well as referrals for local services and census information when identifying need and allocating resources.

Stakeholder engagement

The document review highlighted a variety of small-scale communication mechanisms between CA recipients and the SN officers who manage their agreements, including orientation to CA meetings, recipient letters, monitoring activities (e.g., site visits, calls, e-mails), compliance audits, local SWIS coordinators (in some cases) and policy guidance encouraging SN officers to foster links with Board of Education representatives.

There are also large-scale mechanisms for coordination and communication which include federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) members and stakeholders in the Settlement sector, including, the National Settlement and Integration Council, the Forum of FPT Ministers Responsible for Immigration and the FPT Settlement Working Group.

Case studies also identified extensive engagement mechanisms which varied by SPOs, including: internal steering/advisory committees, external steering/advisory committees (including school board/school members); working groups (including schools, SWIS managers and youth members), SWIS coordinators and Ad Hoc issues working groups (e.g., online services, belongingness, family involvement). Interviewees also noted that some stakeholders attend Local Immigration Partnership committee and school staff meetings.

While the mechanisms in place for stakeholder engagement were viewed largely as beneficial, as there is flexibility in how SPOs may operate, the evaluation found the level of stakeholder engagement varied by region and service provider.

Annex D: Endnotes from page 18

i Selimos, E. D., and Daniel, Y. (2017). The role of schools in shaping the settlement experiences of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 8(2), 90-109 at https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/ijcyfs/article/view/17878

ii Ngo, H., and Schleifer, B. (2005) immigrant children and youth in focus. *Canadian Issues*, (Spring): 29–33

iii Anisef, P. and Kilbride, K.M. (2001) The needs of newcomer youth and emerging "best practices" to meet those needs. Toronto, Canada. *Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement*.

iv Shields, J. and Lujan, O. (2018) Immigrant youth in Canada: A literature review of migrant youth settlement and service issues. *Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement.*

v The *Constitution Act*, 1982, Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11

vi *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (S.C. 2001, c. 27)

vii Ibid

viii Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Garnett, Adamuti-Trache, & Ungerleider, 2008; Krahn & Taylor, 2005; Sweet, Anisef, & Walters, 2010; Wilkinson, Yan, Ka Tat Tsang, Sin, & Lauer, 2011

ix See ÉduCanada at https://www.educanada.ca/programs-programmes/elementary-primaire.aspx?lang=eng