Employing the Evidence:
Building Employment and Entrepreneurial Opportunities for Refugee Newcomers through Community-Based Settlement and Inclusion Practices
Major Paper
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Abstract

Brockville, Ontario, a community of 22,000 people along the bank of the St. Lawrence River in Eastern Ontario, has welcomed almost 80 refugee newcomers in three years’ time. About half of these individuals are adults and half are children. The community was relatively unprepared for such a large influx of newcomers all at once – services and supports are largely in place for those newcomers who “trickle in” as immigrants. This investigation looks at how the community can better support and provide service to those newcomers who have arrived with vast skill sets and so far, underutilized talents. Using a 2016 study into the best practices for implementing programming and services for assisting newcomers – specifically immigrants – in entrepreneurship, as well as attracting those entrepreneurs, this study looks at two central recommendations to assist in the building of entrepreneurial skill among these working age newcomers. This investigation finds that although the recommendations were originally made for the City of Brockville to implement, community-based groups – especially Refugees for Brockville – can collaborate with existing agencies to initiate programming that is culturally connected and community-integrated and will assist refugee newcomers on their professional trajectories regarding entrepreneurship and beyond.
Introduction

Brockville, Ontario, located in the eastern part of the province and situated along the St. Lawrence River, has become internationally recognized\(^1\) for its efforts to welcome newcomers to the area, particularly since 2015. At the height of the Syrian refugee crisis, the Mayor of Brockville, David L. Henderson, began a municipally-backed community effort to begin welcoming refugee newcomers – an effort that resulted in almost 60 new Brockvillians by early 2018. As the close of 2018 approaches, Brockville is preparing to welcome another four newcomer refugee families.

As part of a strategic and coordinated effort on the part of the City, the now former Economic Development Director, David Paul, and the Mayor acknowledged the importance of welcoming newcomers at the pivotal moment in history. The Mayor and staff also recognized the economic, social, and cultural benefits of embracing, celebrating and including all newcomers whether via immigration or refugee status and no matter how long ago they began to call Brockville home. This is why, in February 2016, the City of Brockville’s Economic Development Department in collaboration with the Leeds & Grenville Immigration Partnership (LIP), received funding from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) to investigate innovative ways to attract immigrant entrepreneurs (and more peripherally, foreign direct investment) to Brockville specifically, and to rural communities/small cities more generally. This effort was to gain insight from the experience of those who had immigrated to Canada, located

\(^1\) The work of Refugees for Brockville was featured in the Economist here: [https://www.economist.com/united-states/2017/04/22/america-and-canada-divided-by-a-common-border?src=scn%2Ftw%2Fte%2Fbl%2FLEXINGTONAMERICAANDCANADADIVIDEDBYACOMMONBORDER&fbclid=IwAR28eybd8L_HDLHq8NQjoJZYyusc5pypSCTEV6mZH7InPGOzfsHdl2Hv8g](https://www.economist.com/united-states/2017/04/22/america-and-canada-divided-by-a-common-border?src=scn%2Ftw%2Fte%2Fbl%2FLEXINGTONAMERICAANDCANADADIVIDEDBYACOMMONBORDER&fbclid=IwAR28eybd8L_HDLHq8NQjoJZYyusc5pypSCTEV6mZH7InPGOzfsHdl2Hv8g)
in Brockville, and started businesses in the City. The research was based on in person, qualitative, in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs who were immigrants to Canada living in Brockville and a secondary assessment of the literature on best practices for immigrant entrepreneurship.

I was hired in 2016 by the City of Brockville to conduct this study and report the findings to Council who were then expected to enact the recommendations. Sadly, this did not happen as a few strong voices on Council negated the results by stating that there was not a need for this kind of endeavour in the City. The recommendations then all but died at the Council meeting in terms of the City of Brockville, aside from the Mayor, carrying out any of the over 20 recommendations from this initial study entitled *Where the World Can Reside: A Toolkit for Attracting Immigrant Entrepreneurs to Small City Canada* (WTWCR).²

Refugees for Brockville, the municipally-backed community initiative that the Mayor began in 2015 is still going strong and, as mentioned above, has helped to welcome, settle, and include over 60 refugee newcomers since early 2015. Mayor Henderson named me Chair of this Committee in early 2016, shortly after the ill-fated Council meeting described, and I have remained Chair since. The Committee will be helping to welcome another 20+ people before the end of the year and this time, I am concerned about not just welcome, but settlement in terms of gainful employment and real inclusion.

Like many other rural cities and communities across Ontario and Canada, Brockville has seen its fair share of booms and busts in the last 40 years. Brockville, like other small urban

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communities in Ontario that serve vast rural areas that surround them, and many across
Canada, find themselves in a complicated situation when it comes to population growth, and
the concomitant effects of such growth (or stagnation), on economic development. The City of
Brockville is no exception. With a population that has been incrementally decreasing or staying
relatively neutral since 2006, Brockville finds itself among the many municipalities across
Ontario (and Canada) that seeks to create innovative ways of attracting residents and
investment, both meant to ensure the long-term viability of the City. What is so often stated by
young people out-migrating, or those looking for gainful employment in the City, is that there
are no “good jobs.” Since the industrial days of 1980s and much of that industry and
employment moving offshore in the 1990s, the employment landscape has changed in Canada,
especially for those in rural communities. Add to that difficulty the reality of the aging Baby
Boomers and rural communities find themselves in what looks like an untenable situation.

So how then, to attract and retain people to smaller communities across the province
and country, especially when those communities appear relatively unattractive to those looking
for employment and amenities? Much work has been done on attracting immigrants from
various parts of the world via provincial nomination programs and through other means both
coordinated and informal, to attract the “best and the brightest” internationally (see Caldwell,
2010 and Florida, 2002). Canada, including Brockville, now has a large pool of refugees, mostly
from Syria, who are educated and looking to start new lives. According to the Government of
Canada website, there are now just over 40,081 refugees from Syria\(^3\) and many come highly

\(^3\) [https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/welcome-syrian-refugees/key-figures.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/welcome-syrian-refugees/key-figures.html)
educated and with differing levels of English speaking and comprehension (anecdotally, in the experience of Brockville).
Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research will be to review the recommendations made by immigrant entrepreneurs in the initial study and the overall recommendations of the initial study to investigate what can be done at the community level to ensure an active approach to settlement and inclusion that involves helping newcomers potentially become entrepreneurs. By creating a pathway to entrepreneurship, as an option, not a requirement, community groups and sponsors can be better prepared for ongoing refugee newcomer sponsorship which appears to be the want and will of many Brockvillians.

Objectives of the Research

Objectives of the research include:

1) Understanding the recommendations made in the initial study in the context of community-based, community-building work rather than within a municipal framework;

2) Utilizing the recommendations for an action plan for Refugees for Brockville; and

3) Creating a framework of practice for other communities that may be in similar situation with newcomers looking for employment and/or wanting to pursue entrepreneurship.
Literature Review

It is well documented in the literature, and in the practices of settlement agencies, that newcomers to Canada oftentimes have difficulty securing work due to language barriers and lack of Canadian experience. Entrepreneurship can also be a requirement of immigration as Ley (2006) explains,

In recent years significant theoretical development has occurred in research on immigrant entrepreneurship. Explanations for entrepreneurship range from the characteristics and resources of particular ethnic groups to broader contextual circumstances, that is from supply features to demand conditions (Kloosterman and Rath 2003; Light and Gold 2000). For our sample of business people the fact of entrepreneurship is a given, a requirement of immigration itself, permitting household entry to Canada within the entry class of business immigrant (744).

Immigrant entrepreneurship is therefore both welcomed in Canada, and it becomes a default when other avenues are not viable. Robertson and Grant (2016) explain that,

Significant barriers often face newcomers to Canada. One particularly important barrier to the economic integration of skilled immigrants is that they cannot find suitable employment because their foreign qualifications are not fully recognized, a phenomenon known as brain waste (Bauder, 2003; Grant & Nadin, 2007; Reitz, 2001). In some cases, skilled, educated immigrants may respond to this difficulty by creating their own business. This is strongly suggested by Li’s (2001) finding that the odds of self-employment are increased for immigrants with higher educational qualifications, and by the general observation that rates of self-employment are higher among immigrants than among the native-born within the host society (Tubergen, 2006; Waldinger, Aldrich, & Ward 1990), a finding that has been noted in Canada over the last 30 years (Hou & Wang, 2011) (395).

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“Often called a land of immigrants, Canada is recognized as one of the top migrant destination countries in the world (Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011 1). The new settlers bring a vast diversity of languages and cultures. The Canadian government has explicitly embraced this diversity through federally legislated policies. For example, The Multiculturalism Act of 1971 recognized Canada as a multicultural nation within a bilingual framework and proclaimed “cultural pluralism” as a defining concept of Canadian identity (Ashworth 35–49). Alongside and often despite this multicultural rhetoric, newcomers are encouraged to increase their social, economic and cultural integration into Canadian society. One of the most heavily emphasized pathways to integration is knowledge and proficiency in one of the official languages.”
This explanation is commonly referred to as the “disadvantage hypothesis.” Robertson and Grant (2016), among others however, also believe there are significant social psychological variables to be considered. Robertson and Grant argue, “Social psychological variables play an important role in the choices that immigrants make in terms of acquiring resources, the type of business they open, and their intentions to remain in Canada. Therefore, there is support for the idea that immigrant entrepreneurship should be considered from a social psychological as well as economic perspective and that future research should consider the influence of identity, acculturation, and discrimination in immigrant entrepreneurship” (405). In general, it is arguable that the literature indicates that immigrant entrepreneurship is based on a number of factor/motivators/triggers and that one explanation would be incomplete.

But what of refugee entrepreneurship, especially given the fact that immigrants and refugees get lumped into the generic category of “newcomer” and are offered at least some of the same settlement services depending on the size, skill, and capacity of any given community they enter? Recent studies on refugee employment in Quebec for instance, tell a different story for refugees than for immigrants. Hanley, J. et al. (2018) indicate that in their study of privately sponsored Syrian refugees in Montreal,

Employment In terms of employment, only 30% (N=189) of the participants are currently employed. However, 70% of the participants are enrolled in French classes, which could give a clear idea of their daily occupation. Among those who work, the majority received help from Syrian or Arab friends (35%) or family (23%) to find a job. Some participants were able to find jobs on their own without anyone’s help (21%). Those participants who were 31 to 64 years old have mainly counted on the support of their Syrian friends to find their jobs. Those who are under 31 have counted more on their families and themselves to find jobs (Figure 9). Men counted on friends from their community and their family a bit more than women; however, women had slightly more important support from friends from outside their ethnic community (5%) compared to men (2%) (142).
Prospects, resources, social capital, and other requirements for employment, let alone entrepreneurship are significantly lacking for the refugee. Hanley et al. found that cultural connections were the most important to the new Syrian Canadians, and it can be extrapolated that without an established Syrian community (everyone being newcomers themselves), there is little footing for newcomer refugees to build businesses on – at this stage, three years since their arrival in Canada. The researchers state:

The results of our study highlight, as described by Stewart et al. (2008), that the forming of social support is strongly cultural. Many of our participants asserted that it is not part of their culture to ask for help outside of their immediate circle of family and friends. Asking for help is feared to make one more vulnerable because strangers and authority figures could be dangerous in Syria but also because, culturally, Syrians are used to counting on themselves with the inexistence of community groups or the difference in the role they play. Consequently, and based on past experiences, many unknown community members, public services and community organizations here in Canada were suspicious to some participants. Conversely, in Syria, family and trusted friends was considered to be sufficient – or at least safe. Yet here, in Montreal and in Canada, making broader connections can make the difference in terms of accessing better employment, housing and social opportunities – without causing danger. Therefore, many of our participants are exploring a shift in their very concept of “social network” (ibid. 144).

The authors of the study also encourage service providers to locate cultural brokers, people already close to or working with the newcomers, to instill a sense of entitlement to public services and engagement with community resources as this is not the natural inclination of Syrians in general (ibid. 144). While this study does not reflect the vastness of the employment and entrepreneurial aptitude of refugees worldwide, it does provide a preliminary insight into how Syrian refugees, over 40,000 of whom now reside in Canada, are faring when it comes to building new lives via gainful employment of any kind.

There are, of course, the highly praised exceptions. These are the new refugees, most predominantly Syrian since they are the largest group of refugees to be taken in since the
Vietnamese “boat people” of the 1970s, who are highlighted and lauded by the media as “success stories.” While not diminishing the tremendous success of these individuals, the success of a few does not necessarily translate into the success of many. The findings of Dhalimi, A. et al. (2018) indicate that “discrimination with respect to employment is linked to ethnicity, and not migration status, and that discrimination is related to poor self-reported health. Findings suggest that it is a variable that needs to be considered in the newcomers’ experience and should be addressed by policymakers when discussing integrative programs for refugees and immigrants” (328). While not explicitly linked to migration status, the study illustrates that markers of difference contribute to a refugee’s inability to find work and therefore maintain good health in a determinant way. In the United States, refugees have similar difficulty attaching to employment – Sienkiewicz, H. C. et al. (2013) found that “difficulties finding employment are a significant challenge for most refugees. These challenges were unanticipated by all participants interviewed. Cultural orientations prior to migration should discuss the difficulties associated with finding employment so that refugees transitioning to a new country are better prepared for the challenges that await them” (23).

Similar to other studies, the authors state that these new American citizens found it difficult to find employment of any kind due to social and community ties being weak (ibid. 23).

What is often missing from these investigations into employment as part of settlement discussions is the extent to which Canada, especially rural Canada, needs immigration, including

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refugee resettlement, as part of its present and future due to changing demographics and other related realities. As noted in the initial study, WTWCR (2016)

Rural communities in Ontario, and many across Canada, find themselves in a complicated situation when it comes to population growth, and the concomitant effects of such growth (or stagnation), on economic development. The City of Brockville is no exception. With a population that has been incrementally decreasing or staying relatively neutral since 2006, Brockville finds itself among the many municipalities across Ontario (and Canada) that seeks to create innovative ways of attracting residents and investment, both meant to ensure the long-term viability of the City. As Caldwell (2010) points out, in the future, “the issue for much of rural Ontario is not likely to be a shortage of jobs but, rather, a shortage of people to occupy key positions. With impending retirements, continued youth out-migration, and the attraction of large urban centres to immigrants, it will be difficult to find skilled labour in many professions. An opportunity, albeit a challenging one, is for rural communities to target immigrants as a means to maintain essential services” (9) (5).

Finding meaningful employment for all newcomers must therefore be a priority not just in a social or cultural sense, but also in terms of economic and population viability. This means that all levels of government should be concerned with attracting and retaining newcomers from all parts of the globe and with various backgrounds, skills, and aptitudes. What is missing from a more fulsome discussion is how community groups help to buttress and foster the welcome, settlement, and inclusion of newcomers in order to ensure success. Whether or not municipal governments, for example, want to go beyond attraction (and based on a review of the literature, see George and Selimos (2018), few do want to take this step beyond facilitating getting people to the community), community groups are always identified as key players in the settlement process. George and Selimos (2018), in their narrative research with newcomers specifically related to welcome and settlement experiences indicate that,

Still, interviews conveyed critical perspectives that when taken together provided opportunities for deeper engagement in welcoming. The views of stakeholders about immigrants were complex, emerging from their own experience and the different ways
they engaged in the city (i.e., as workers, neighbors, etc.). They conveyed multi-layered understandings of the city as a welcoming place, and many reflected upon, compared and distinguished their own sense of belonging to that of immigrants. The city was somewhat welcoming for some people; there were some serious issues of racialization and exclusion which set conditions for belonging and inhibited immigrant attachments. Stakeholders identified how the structural and funding climate informed their formal and personal engagement in welcoming. This was reflected in their different views of advocacy. For some, advocacy was an everyday orientation. It emerged more from a sense of commitment, their identifications and how they operate as people, than it did from the mandates of their jobs, which discouraged direct advocacy. Stakeholders identified how networks that could foster stronger engagement with the settlement sector were thwarted by employee turnover, developed by informal connections or enhanced by sustained and pro-active commitment and presence of key individuals. A narrative approach allowed stakeholders to make linkages that were not supported or were subverted by the formal welcoming process. The everyday support offered by churches and ethnic organizations, for example, were identified even though they are marginalized from formal settlement policy (35).

Community groups have achieved some great successes in terms of settlement – particularly when backed by some level of government. The federal government funds local immigration partnerships, or LIPs, that act in community to coordinate resources, agencies, and individuals. Qayyum, A., & Burstein, M. (2013) in their research on best practices for LIPs, found that

By far the most recurring, significant practice was the inclusiveness of the LIP central council. Item 28 measured if a LIP central council included members from a majority of the following – federal ministries, provincial ministries, municipal departments, employer bodies/employers, schools/schoolboards, hospitals/health units and health networks, justice/police, media, universities, colleges, immigrant representatives, ethnocultural organizations, religious organizations, francophone organizations/networks (7-8).

For the successful welcome, settlement, and inclusion of newcomers – including refugees – we see that cultural connection and community integration are by far “best practices” as identified by the literature.
Methodology

I employ reflexive practice in this analysis by combining my experience in the field as an economic development researcher and practitioner with a critical case study analysis using the initial study that I produced for the City of Brockville as a key source of information about what is possible for enhancing the settlement and inclusion of newcomers. Hibbert, Sillience, and Diefenbach (2014) argue that reflexive practice is not necessarily an alternate method of inquiry, but rather, that it “instead informs how methods are applied. Specifically, [they] advocate a stance toward the application of qualitative methods that legitimizes insights from the situated life-with-others of the researcher.” I purposefully amalgamate my experiences in the field with the initial study that includes the voices and experiences of 20 immigrant entrepreneurs in Canada. Using my own lens as a practitioner of economic development, and the insights provided in the text, including the best practices collected from across Canada, I build an understanding, as well as a set of employable practices, that aims to further the community’s ability to engage in sustainable, successful, and smart newcomer refugee sponsorship.

This approach seeks to meld effective immigrant entrepreneurial strategies that are community-based (and perhaps municipally-backed) – both that were suggested in the initial study for Brockville and those that have been proposed and employed successfully elsewhere - and translate those into action-oriented strategies for Brockville’s newcomer refugee community. With or without municipal backing, Refugees for Brockville will seek to discover what may work for newcomers as a broadly defined category, in order to meet their personal and professional goals in a new country and a new community.
Case study provides the ideal vehicle for understanding a phenomenon quickly and deeply, regardless of if it is a representative example. Case study strives for depth not breadth in terms of capturing everyone’s experience, and acknowledges that lived experience has resonance for many without being “the same” for everyone. Patton defines case study as attempting to “shed light on a phenomena by studying in-depth a single case example of the phenomena” (CourseLink materials – John FitzGibbon’s Research Methods) and indicates that as part of qualitative research, case study is meant to “yield detailed, thick description...capture direct quotes and experiences” (ibid.).

Case study is “an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood” (Baxter and Jack, 2008: 544). Further, case study proves to be an ideal method of inquiry when: “(a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context” (ibid. 545). Case study therefore lends itself to exploratory research that is full of description, relationship, and nuance, without the necessity or obligation of generalizability. As indicated in the course content, “the other main thing to remember during case studies is their flexibility. Whilst a pure scientist is trying to prove or disprove a hypothesis, a case study might introduce new and unexpected results during its course, and lead to research taking new directions” (EXPLORABLE, CourseLink, nd – John FitzGibbon’s Research Methods).
Setting the Stage: The Original Document

In February 2016, the City of Brockville’s Economic Development Department in collaboration with the Leeds & Grenville Immigration Partnership (LIP) received funding from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) to investigate innovative ways to attract immigrant entrepreneurs (and more peripherally, foreign direct investment) to Brockville specifically, and to rural communities/small cities more generally. The toolkit, called Where the World Can Reside, was the result of nine months of research, analysis, consultation, and outreach into the central question of how the City of Brockville’s capacity can be further developed to attract and retain immigrant entrepreneurs to the area. The toolkit was specifically designed to take the foundation laid by the City of Brockville and the umbrella organizations (for a complete list of these organizations see Appendix A) that make up the Leeds & Grenville Immigration Partnership (now the St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership), and move it forward into action by assessing the situation Brockville currently finds itself in vis-à-vis welcoming new immigrant entrepreneurs, helping them to get established, and providing them an environment that allows them to remain and flourish as part of Brockville’s community and economy.

There were over 26 recommendations made to the City of Brockville based on in-depth interviews, an investigation of best practices and visits to Ottawa-based embassies that had ties to Brockville and area or had expressed interest in collaborating on immigrant attraction to Eastern Ontario. A Master List of Recommendations can be found in Appendix B. To date, all recommendations remain shelved by Brockville City Council. This study seeks to breathe new
life into the recommendations by choosing two to examine in light of how they can be mobilized by community groups, specifically Refugees for Brockville with the collaborative help of other community-based agencies, to assist newcomer refugees in attaching to employment and, potentially, to becoming entrepreneurs. The two recommendations chosen for examination are:

1) Joining the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD), and,

2) Highlighting the quality of life in Brockville via a Brockville Cultural Ambassador Program such as the pilot program forwarded by the Leeds & Grenville Immigration Partnership (now the St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership).

The reason that these two recommendations are given preference is because they were determined to be the most actionable in discussions with the broader Refugees for Brockville Committee. The Refugees for Brockville Committee believes that it is in a position to do both of these things in a timely and expedient manner; therefore, the following examination will employ the secondary evidence alongside the original WTWCR (for Brockville-specific newcomers context) as a case study example to explore the viability and actions associated with enacting these recommendations.
Joining the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination

As articulated in the literature review, real and perceived discrimination against newcomers, or those individuals with visible or audible differences can be a barrier to employment, as well as health and well-being more generally. Rural Canada, no matter how stereotypically “nice” and welcoming, can and does have issues with racism and discriminatory housing and employment practices – e.g. Teixeira (2017) found that for newcomer immigrants in British Columbia, “the housing search process in Kelowna’s rental housing market met with significant barriers in locating affordable rental housing. Of these barriers, the most commonly cited were: (a) high housing costs; (b) lack of reliable housing information, including lack of access to organizations that provide housing help (government or not); and (c) prejudice by landlords based on the immigrants' ethnic and racial background” (168-9). Additionally, as pointed out in WTWCR, the Association of Urban Municipalities in Alberta (AUMA) outlines, Municipalities are tasked with providing good governance, providing services and facilities that are necessary in the opinion of council, and developing safe and viable communities under the Municipal Governance Act (5). AUMA argues that municipalities cannot fully succeed in these tasks if a portion of the population is excluded [or is not fully included] from engaging in democratic governance, assessing services or facilities, or enjoying security and prosperity because of discrimination [exclusion] (ibid.). Further AUMA argues that “Whether the priority is to drive down the infrastructure deficit, diversify the economy or develop a more vibrant cultural life, building a reputation as an inclusive community will help attract the diversity of individuals required to contribute to the labour market, the economy, and the social and cultural dimensions of your municipality” (ibid.) (Schoemaker Holmes, 2016: 10).

6 Find the revised version of Auma’s 2006 Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Toolkit here: https://auma.ca/sites/default/files/Advocacy/Programs_initiatives/WiC/wic_toolkit_-_march_2_2015_2.pdf
Due to Canada’s history of colonization, ongoing colonialism, and racist, problematic treatment of people of colour/cultural groups (e.g., the Japanese internment), all levels of government have a role to play in mitigating the effects of discrimination and racism. But as AUMA points out, discrimination is a form of exclusion, and it can be an insidious one. According to E. Patten et al. (2015), the classification or label of “newcomer” can follow individuals for much long than their first few years of residence in a new country. In their Australian study, for example,

It is common for newcomers who have had periods of residence of 10–20 years to identify as being ‘new’ to the area and report the experience of ‘feeling like a newcomer’. This experience is comparable with feeling like being a local for ‘two nanoseconds’ compared with those families born and bred in the district for generations. In Davis and colleagues’ study, older newcomers were aware of the need to belong to the group who are born and bred as they ‘will always support others who are local born and bred’. Despite this, it is probable that the longer someone lives in a community, the more likely it is they share common histories and will be included in community activity (132).

The City of Brockville aligns with these findings and, as far as inclusion is concerned, does not score highly. In order to determine the community’s level of inclusion, AUMA identifies 15 Areas of Focus. Each area of focus has “indicators that help to identify where the community fits in with an accurate degree of specificity” (Schoemaker Holmes, 2016: 12). From the original report:

These areas cover municipal government and community areas of inclusion from Leadership and Accountability to Citizen and Community Engagement. The evaluation tool itself is based on the concept of benchmarking meaning that it allows the City of Brockville to compare its “current state with outstanding practices elsewhere in order to help your municipality improve” (ibid. 4). Based on data and information gleaned through in-depth qualitative interviews with local immigrant entrepreneurs, consultations with local and regional economic development departments, interviews, with local service personnel and agencies that serve newcomers and immigrants, research into municipal policies and practices, as well as analysis of local media outlets, the inclusion evaluation was conducted. Out of a possible score of 56 points that
exemplify what it means to have a Culture of Inclusion in any community, the City of Brockville rates 28. At an inclusion rate of 50%, Brockville stands in a solid middle ground—a position that indicates both successes and areas that can be improved (ibid. 12).

Inclusion and integration are also not the same thing, and neither is one as desirable as the other. Integration assumes an existing model that newcomers are supposed to “fit into” versus inclusion which is about practices that allow for the question of “who fits” to be much broader and more robust. Frost (2014) makes a distinction between “superficial” versus “real” inclusion as pictured below.

Table 1. Frost’s Real Versus Superficial Inclusion

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of Inclusion</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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<tr>
<td>Superficial inclusion</td>
<td>Including token diversity</td>
<td>Including homogeneous groups or minimal aspects of diversity, usually limited aspects of demographic identity only, eg race, gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real inclusion</td>
<td>Embracing infinite diversity</td>
<td>Including fuller aspects of diversity, such as ability (IQ, cognition, skills), experiences (cumulative life events, coming out, hidden disabilities) as well as demographic identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brockville, as both a municipality and a community, continues to grapple with the distinction between diversity and inclusion and both are still arguably very much entrenched in superficial inclusion. Moving beyond tokenism and toward real inclusion is a hopeful prospect for Brockville and arguably achievable through joining CMMARD. As other rural communities have
demonstrated, a plan that involves the entire community can lead to very real and significant success in terms of helping newcomers attach and settle into communities.

The Case of Winkler

Winkler, Manitoba provides a fantastic case example of what is achievable through coordinated efforts. From the original report:

Rural communities in Manitoba, such as the exciting case study offered by The City of Winkler, provide promising examples of boosting newcomer rates via pre-existing connections with existing Russian-German, German, and Kanadier-Mennonites. Initiated by The City of Winkler and the District Chamber of Commerce, and with the help of an agreement between the province and the federal government, the “Winkler Initiative” began in 1997 as a response to the community’s evolving human resource needs. During the five year period spanning 1999-2004 Winkler welcomed 1832 immigrants through the Provincial Nominee Program to a small centre of only 9000 at that time. According to the Mayor of Winkler, the arrival of newcomers was remarkably smooth and that “this was the result of intentional planning: they were very careful to match newcomers to the needs of the community, so that they found work and formed new friends quickly. Also, newcomers were predominantly German Mennonites which was a match to the broader Winkler community in terms of faith and culture. Winkler is now Manitoba’s sixth largest city (as of 2011), with a population currently estimated at 12,000, and the second fast growing city out of nine in the province. According to Manitoba’s Rural Development Institute, Winkler serves as an encouraging example of what may be achieved in a rural immigration initiative in the province when there exists close collaboration between business, city officials and Manitoba Labour and Immigration. Due to the area’s predominant religious, cultural, linguistic and economic elements, it remains appropriate to ask how this particular experience may or may not be reproduced elsewhere in the province. A widening of the immigration process should affect more of the surrounding region and provide more lessons still. The Winkler example stresses the importance for stakeholder preparation, interaction and cooperation, as well as appropriate supports and services for the immigrant population (Rural Development Institute Working Paper, 2005) (Schoemaker Holmes, 2016: 13-14).

While this is an attraction initiative, it is notable that Winkler worked from the strengths of the community to ensure success, and looked at the needs of the community in order to prepare for the specific newcomers that they were targeting. This aligns with the principle of culture that is so relevant in the literature in terms of ensuring success. What we have now in Brockville
is an entire community of Syrians, and more broadly, recent newcomers, that the City and community services have had to play catch up to meet the needs of. While we cannot anticipate country conflict or the mass evacuation of tens of thousands that will resettle in the country, if Brockville had not already been working from a model of tokenism, that is, where the person who is different from the dominant culture is an exception, not the rule, Brockville would have been better prepared for the incoming newcomers. This is precisely why joining CCMARD helps the City of Brockville and the community groups who serve newcomers in it – because it enables everyone to be prepared for cultural difference, with intercultural communication skills, and able to respond nimbly in the case of ongoing welcome, settlement, and inclusion efforts more broadly.

The City must be involved in joining CCMARD insofar as Council must pass a resolution to do so and a Councilor must be appointed as “overseer” of the initiative as a whole. What joining CCMARD looks like logistically is outline in Appendix C. The City’s involvement was guaranteed with the last Council as Refugees for Brockville and attraction initiatives were part of the Mayor’s, City Manager’s and Economic Development Director’s overall goals. As of December 1, 2018, all of these people have been replaced (or will be soon). There is still some limited support for initiatives that are based in diversity and inclusion at the City level, but the most challenging aspect of joining CCMARD will be convincing Council to pass a resolution. Brockville City Council is reflective of many rural municipal governments and is made up of a largely homogeneous group.

During my relatively short time in municipal, or “local” government, it has become apparent that certain interests are forwarded much more often than others and certain voices
speak much louder than others at Council meetings, Committee meetings, at events, and around important decision-making tables. Importantly, local area decision-makers are predominantly business owners and this reality provides a particular context in which local governments appears to function. The reality of business owning elites as primary arbiters of what is good for the public as whole has a long history in Canada. Baker (1981) and Artibise (1982) trace this monopoly of “interest” to the early 19th century in Canada when only merchants, lawyers, and shopkeepers made local decisions at the time towns and cities were incorporated, thereby limiting franchise places so as to effectively limit opposition (Artibise cited in Tindal, Tindal, Stewart & Smith, 2013: 11). This dominant group need not have majority numbers, but they are those who hold the most power and influence and who exercise the ability to create norms or standards of practice. As argued by Grant (2005), “conceptualizations of the public interest appear within a particular constellation of values in time and space” (48), yet those values appear to have remained quite constant over the past number of decades as planners continue to be influenced by the context in which they work which is arguably “governing as an old boys club” (Tindal et al., 2013: 353). As Tindal et al. (2013) explain,

A small and stable population and a relatively homogenous community result in the election of like-minded individuals (traditionally, white, middle aged males) who find it fairly easy to reach consensus on most issues. In a small community, members of council will interact in a variety of settings – for example, through business contacts, social gatherings, and membership in local service clubs. Conversations often extend to municipal matters and councillors may even get together on a regular basis, for a morning coffee or an evening drink, to discuss issues facing the municipality. It becomes easier, and certainly more comfortable, to discuss and resolve issues expeditiously and with minimal debate at council meetings. Over time, councillors begin to view municipal operations as their personal fiefdom (353).
Refugees for Brockville will therefore have to proceed with a more robust line of argumentation for the value of joining CCMARD for newcomers in order to help build a culturally connected avenue for successful and real community inclusion for refugee newcomers to attach to in order to be successful.
Cultural Ambassadors: Building on What Works

Refugees for Brockville and the City of Brockville would not have been successful without the full and unwavering support of the community – specifically the existing Muslim Community and the local Imam, Ahmad Khadra, himself a Syrian immigrant. It is the community, with coordination by local officials, religious leaders, and community leaders that have made welcoming almost 80 people to Brockville in the last three years successful. Refugees for Brockville has been highlighted by the Economist and internationally by mayors in England as well as by the UNHCR for its work – all of this is due to the diligence of the community – not the decision-making of those in power. People in the area were literally begging to help in any way they can – and have given money, material goods, and their time in an effort to provide a welcoming home for incoming refugee newcomers.

The public often meets refugees, and stateless people or those seeking asylum, with misunderstanding, skepticism, compassion, and a whole range of other emotions and concerns. Brockville has demonstrated that it is unique insofar as it wished to respond the Syrian Refugee Crisis by opening its doors. In the original study, every immigrant entrepreneur stated that Brockville was a welcoming city – kind, friendly people, and a great place to live. Brockville has spent significant time and effort on immigration, and now refugees, for the past eight years, since fully embracing the federally funded Local Immigration Partnership program. The former Economic Development Director understood the value of welcoming newcomers, especially given that,

The fact is, as rural populations decline, as the majority are (save for some communities that lay at the outskirts of expanding high-density rural areas) these communities need
support from outside, just as Canada as a whole does in order to grow and thrive. What rural communities are experiencing in terms of population decline represents a microcosm of what is happening in Ontario, at a provincial level, and in Canada on a national level. Canada as a country faces a situation where the residents of the nation no longer meet the replacement fertility rate needed to sustain the population. This reality means that, without immigration, Canada’s population would be headed toward decline. The Government of Canada reports that, in recent times, the contribution of natural increase to population growth has waned as the Canadian population aged and fertility rates declined. Today, natural increase accounts for less than one-third of Canada’s population growth and has ceased to be the major player in the equation. Meanwhile, migratory increase [immigration] plays an increasing role in Canada’s population growth. Migratory increase currently accounts for about two-thirds of Canada’s population growth (Population growth: Migratory increase overtakes natural increase, Statistics Canada, 2016) (Schoemaker Holmes, 2016: 7).

Further, Statistics Canada projects that immigration will not only continue to be a key driver of population growth in the coming year—without it, Canada’s population growth could be close to zero in 20 years (ibid.). This reality has significant implications for the Canadian labour force and the availability of service providers and others who will undoubtedly be needed to support Canada’s aging population (ibid. 7-8). The reality is that

Rural communities reflect this shifting population reality because of the significant outmigration of youth from rural communities where jobs tend to be scarcer as industry has changed. In order to thrive as communities and as a nation, Canada must welcome newcomers. Immigration is also understood as necessary to the well-being of the province. As the Chair of Ontario’s Expert Roundtable on Immigration, Julia Deans, asserts, “It is clear to us that immigration is crucial to the well-being of every person in Ontario” (The Final Report By Ontario’s Expert Roundtable on Immigration (FROERI), 2012). The Roundtable goes on to explain that Canada was built on natural resources; its future will be built on human resources” (ibid.). In short, immigration is necessary at federal, provincial, and municipal levels in order to maintain Canadian economic, social, cultural, and population needs (ibid. 8).

Whether municipalities want to engage in welcoming newcomers is, in the end, up to that jurisdiction, but the evidence indicates that smaller, rural communities will disappear or

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7 Found at [http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2014001-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2014001-eng.htm)
become subsumed as urban centres continue to burst at the seams and encroach on the lands of rural areas.

The St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership, a close collaborator with Refugees for Brockville, is already doing a great deal of work when it comes to retention and attraction despite the latter not being a direct part of their mandate. One project that they attempted to get underway a number of years ago was an ambassadorial program to help facilitate attraction by appointing cultural ambassadors from various countries of origin to espouse the quality of life attractants of Brockville to their home communities. The details of this program are outlined in Appendix D. While the focus here is one of attracting skilled immigrant and immigrant entrepreneurs, the reality is that many refugees come with extensive skill sets that are often overlooked because of ideas about refugees and what they do or do not bring with them. Brockville alone welcomed a professional musician, and five engineers in the past three years. These are in demand jobs in the area and often language is the only barrier to immediate work, with credential recognition being another stumbling block that all newcomers face.

Refugee resettlement is more appropriately situated in debates and discussions about immigration in Canada more generally. Refugees are often constructed as a “drain” on Canada which aligns with the Canadian policy focus on “useful” or “skilled” immigrants for the last number of decades. This policy focus aligns with nine years of a Conservative government that closely aligned with a position that some have argued was unwelcoming (especially to refugees) at best. The left-leaning Broadbent Institute claims that

Stephen Harper’s Conservatives took power in 2006. For some 30 years prior, Canada’s immigration system was consistently viewed as one of the most welcoming and generous in the world. Although not without growing pains, Canada once worked to accommodate
the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity that travelled with immigrants to Canada. After 10 years of Conservative rule, the immigration climate in Canada is now darker and more exclusive than it has been since the 1970s. The changes to the following five areas of immigration policy have broken Canada’s reputation as a welcoming country, undermining its character as a fair, open and compassionate society: Refugee admission; Low- and semi-skilled workers; High-skilled guest workers; Citizenship as a privilege; and Internal movement rules.8

The denial of health benefits, the assumption of fraud among refugee claimants, and refugee detainments were some of the issues highlighted by the Broadbent Institute that indicate the stance that the previous government took toward refugees. Given this frigid climate, the current Liberal government’s attitudes toward refugees look much more welcoming. However, some who are involved in the refugee resettlement on the ground advise that the Trudeau Government did too much, too soon, too fast without really fully planning for the influx of newcomers who had a variety of needs that the settlement infrastructure was not in place for upon their arrival. As current Conservative Immigration critic Michelle Rempel articulated in the run up to the reveal of the Liberal’s 2018 Immigration plan this past fall, “Canada's 2018 immigration plan must adapt to an ‘extreme change in context,’ with a spike in asylum seekers and an escalating global migration crisis. She said the government must do more to ensure refugees are properly integrated and become productive members of the workforce. ‘There is a big discussion here and the levels report means a lot,’ she said. ‘Canadians are going to be looking at it in terms of whether or not the system is working, and that’s a pretty big question.’”9

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In the case of Brockville, and perhaps at all levels of government, we need to reimagine refugees as full contributors to our communities because they are in fact, especially to small communities who need their passionate dedication to choice, opportunity, and freedom to choose. What exists in Brockville is a cultural ambassador program for refugees in terms of the Brockville Muslim community and now, a burgeoning newcomer community. This reality can be formalized by Refugees for Brockville with the help of the St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership and I argue, it really must be, otherwise we are relying primarily on faith-based groups to do all the work that community services and government should, or are expected, to do. The local Imam and other faith-based groups (mostly sponsors) are finding work for the newcomer refugees they sponsor and mentor – so far the local employment agencies have been much less successful. This is not just because people get jobs based on who they know, but because a coordinated system of services is still lacking in this area, despite improvements made in the last three years.

Refugees need to be recast in the social imagination as bearers or all kinds of opportunity and prosperity; what they contribute to Canada specifically, if far beyond the measure of any one contribution and the faster and more effectively we can attach them to work and opportunity, the more successful we all become. The Conference Board of Canada (CBOC) has recently released one of the most comprehensive guides to Canada’s future forecast when it comes to population and the sustainability of Canadians’ standard/quality of life and the Baby Boom Generation moves into older age. In very basic economic terms, Canada needs immigrants to continue to enter the country and be employed in necessary sectors. In “An Innovative Immigration System at 150 and Beyond,” the CBOC clearly explains that,
To alleviate these pressures in support of a better economic future, Alexander said that Canada will need to increase its productivity, expand and support its talent pool, and tackle immigrant employment barriers. To improve productivity, Canada needs to encourage businesses to invest more in workers and technology, conduct more research and development and commercialize more patents, reduce the regulatory burden on businesses and barriers to competition and labour mobility, and reform its tax system to encourage businesses to grow. Canada also needs to expand its talent pool by supporting the employment of those under-represented in the labour market (Indigenous peoples, women, mature workers, the disabled, disengaged youth, and immigrants) and supplementing its domestic workforce through immigration. Further, Canada needs to identify how to better integrate immigrants in the labour market by continuing to strengthen the linkage between the immigrant selection process and its labour market needs, make it easier for temporary residents to transition to permanent residence, facilitate greater regionalization of immigrants across Canada, improve its accreditation processes, and enhance its settlement supports for permanent and temporary residents such as by ensuring that welcoming communities are fostered across the country (CBOC, 2017: 4).

While there is no doubt that immigrants and refugees face vastly different barriers and need different kinds of support, Brockville is in a unique position to begin building an infrastructure of support that is nimble and responsive and that can adapt to a variety of changing realities including demographics and economics.
Action Plan

Decisive action for Refugees for Brockville on the abovementioned recommendations needs to happen at different levels. First, Refugees for Brockville needs to lobby the City of Brockville to align with UNESCO via the Coalition of Canadian Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD). Using that local, national, and international declaration of a social justice mandate, Refugees for Brockville can work closely with the City-appointed Member of Council who will help champion Brockville’s engagement with CCMARD to make the necessary updates to City policies and to get the word out about this commitment. Next, Refugees for Brockville will work closely with the guidelines outlined by CCMARD to establish its own expanded vision for the Refugees for Brockville Strategic Mandate. The goal will be to establish a clear socially just direction and orientation for the future work of the group that has local, regional, provincial, national, and international influences and impacts.

Secondly, Refugees for Brockville will initiate coordinated efforts to align with the St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigrations Partnership on a more expansive ambassadorial program that is inclusive of refugees and acknowledges their significant contributions. This initiative will draw on culturally relevant and community-integrated strategies that will meet in the needs of newcomers in a more effective way. The goal here is to draw on the strengths of the existing community and help build consciousness around who refugees are, and what their contribution is to communities and Canada as whole. This will involve taking relevant components of the former pilot project and examining how they would benefit from a more inclusive approach to newcomers while also integrating the knowledge, experiences, expertise, and cultural
context/considerations of those who have already been doing this work for the past three years on an intensive, yet informal, basis.
Summation and Conclusions

I agree with Ledowith (2011) when she argues that the “democratic values of respect, dignity, reciprocity, and mutuality together form a practical framework for checking the validity of everything we do in the name of community development, from personal encounters to global action” (4). It has been my experience with Refugees for Brockville that in order for communities to be truly welcoming places where newcomers can settle and be included, the work of those who sponsor and support them must go well beyond traditional conceptions of “charity” and into something more critically informed, socially just, and policy oriented. If we are to have meaningful, informed, and fully realized conversations about newcomer retention and rural growth, we need more passion and purpose than “isn’t it nice” that we are welcoming newcomers. Social inclusion is hard work that does not happen “naturally” or by any one group’s good graces. As Shorthall (2008) argues, “the key to social inclusion (and also necessary for social capital and civic engagement) is participation” (np). Participation is not something that can be forced or assumed, but it can be seen as a definitive measure of how well the communities in which newcomers (and other marginalized groups) are accepted and therefore how well the communities themselves are paying more than just lip service to the values of social justice.

As I have argued above, following Zetter (2007), “the refugee label has become politicized by the reproduction of institutional fractioning and by embedding the wider political discourse of resistance to migrants and refugees” (np). Without clear recognition that refugees (and immigrants) are mired in a political discourse that makes them prove their worthiness as entrants to Canada, we – meaning the City of Brockville or Refugees for Brockville
cannot have meaningful, broader-based discussions among ourselves or in the wider community, about the socially just actions we have to take in order to truly say that we are working toward welcome, settlement, and inclusion.
References Cited


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Appendix A: Leeds & Grenville Immigration Partnership (now the St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership)

The Immigration Partnership is guided by input from a Council that meets quarterly. As of June 2016, the Council is comprised of nineteen different organizations and businesses from across Leeds & Grenville. A complete list of these organizations can be found below. A Working Group dedicated to employment and settlement issues also exists, and its members are indicated by an asterisk (*).

- Brockville & District Multicultural Council
- Chinese & Canadian Heritage Cultural Association
- City of Brockville Economic Development
- CSE Consulting*
- Employment & Education Centre*
- Francophone Immigration Support Network of East Ontario
- Fulford Academy
- KEYS Job Centre*
- Leeds & Grenville Small Business Enterprise Centre*
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
- Thousand Islands National Park (Parks Canada)
- St. Lawrence College
- 1000 Islands Region Workforce Development Board
- The Works Events Canada Inc.
- TR Leger Immigrant Services/TR Leger Services aux Immigrants*
- United Counties of Leeds & Grenville
- Upper Canada Leger Centre
- Volunteer Centre of St. Lawrence-Rideau
- YMCA of Brockville (as of November 2016)
Appendix B: Master List of Where the World Can Reside: A toolkit for immigrant entrepreneur attraction in small city Canada

Recommendations

Target One: Inclusion & Diversity Becoming a more inclusive community that celebrates diversity

Actions:

- Draft a city inclusivity charter/commit to becoming a welcoming and inclusive community
- Join the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD)
- Hire a Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer
- Create a more diverse city council and city hall
- Create a one-stop-shop for immigrant services

Target Two: Regionalizing Becoming a community where secondary migrants look to settle

Actions:

- Collaborate with other municipalities on regionalized immigration attraction strategy
- Adopt a targeted secondary migrant attraction strategy
- Use targeted residential attraction strategies directed at national and international tourists including advertising in ethnic media outlets
- The hiring of a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO) is necessary
- The City of Brockville should partner with existing immigrant serving organizations to develop a one stop shop model of immigrant services that would help constitute the infrastructure needed to be a welcoming, accessible, inclusive community
- The City of Brockville must be strategic in its attraction of immigrants and immigrant entrepreneurs and so should therefore commit to the attraction of secondary migrants—those people who have already entered Canada and are looking to relocate to smaller centres for increased quality of life
- Brockville must assess the attractors, or “pull” factors, for different groups and then market specifically to those groups via those attractors.
- The quality of life and strategic location of Brockville should be highlighted to much larger national and global audiences
- Highlight the quality of life in Brockville via a Brockville Cultural Ambassador Program such as the pilot program forwarded by the Leeds & Grenville Immigration Partnership.
- The City of Brockville requires focused, targeted, and culturally specific attraction programs that can be informed by knowledge gained from existing immigrant communities and via the sentiments of existing immigrant entrepreneurs as included in
this toolkit and associated data that highlight the quality of life as a specific attractor and retainer of immigrants to the community.

- The City must address the overall employment situation in order to attract new residents from either their home countries, or from different parts of Canada. While this is a broad-based recommendation with no specific actions attached—and of course, actions associated with it that are already occurring at the municipal level, it is important that it is highlighted as an identified need by the existing immigrant entrepreneur community
- The City of Brockville can create a population strategy that includes the attraction of immigrant entrepreneurs based on connections with the existing immigrant communities of Brockville.
- Identify the kind of entrepreneur/investment the City of Brockville would like to attract and then establish an ideal method of attraction with the possible help of an arm of government, not embassy/ambassadorial help, which is prepared and equipped to help facilitate the City’s goals.
- Determine the feasibility and desirability of attracting both foreign direct investment and/or individual entrepreneurs. Answering the question: What model of immigrant attraction is the City of Brockville best suited to pursuing—foreign direct investment, entrepreneurial immigrant resident attraction, or both?
- Identify the kind of entrepreneur/investment the City of Brockville would like to attract and then establish an ideal method of attraction with the possible help of an arm of government, not embassy/ambassadorial help, which is prepared and equipped to help facilitate the City’s goals.
- If the ambassadorial/embassy route is something the City of Brockville would like to pursue, perhaps as a regional initiative, connecting with the Canadian embassies in the countries where the individuals and companies exist so that attraction efforts can be collaborative would perhaps be beneficial.
- Tailor attraction efforts to what the residents of the source country are looking for—e.g. Germans and the Dutch are looking for nature and wide open spaces—are attracted to Canada’s natural beauty.
- Try to attract tourist groups by bus—that is, lobby large bus tour operators to stop in Brockville on the Montreal-Toronto routes— create Germany friendly packages
- Brand in such a way that tourism and immigration are connected
- Promote that children can be educated in both French and English because of Germany’s border with France and the associated interest in the language
- Global promotion of Brockville’s business climate and advantages (via source country embassies and via willing chambers and business organizations)
- Help with the immigration process for individuals including advocating for streamlined and advanced accreditation services
Appendix C: Joining the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination

Joining the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination Report to Council

RECOMMENDATIONS

That City Council provide endorsement towards Brockville’s joining the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD), and further, That the City proceed with adopting a resolution to sign the declaration to join, and further, That the City then informs the Canadian Commission for UNESCO about its intention to join CCMARD, and further, That the City proceed with a signing ceremony and undertake an official Action Plan that is guided by CCMARD’s Ten Common Commitments (outlined below).

Purpose According to the Martin Prosperity Institute (2009), an economic think tank that conducted a large scale research project for the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs), Brockville is one of the leading regional benchmark communities for “talent, tolerance and technology” in Eastern Ontario (55). This study provided benchmarking and analysis of Ontario’s rural Creative Economy and found that Brockville had the highest percentage of creative class workers in the area, with the exception of Port Hope (55). Creative class workers are attracted to vibrant and diverse communities—their high concentration in Brockville therefore demonstrates both Brockville’s existing commitment to social and cultural diversity and its ability to attract more creative class workers to what Richard Florida calls its “creative economy” (60). By declaring its commitment to combating racism and all forms of discrimination to the international community by joining the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMMARD), Brockville formalizes its commitment to inclusion and diversity on a global stage. This action takes the City of Brockville’s commitment to celebrating diversity to the next level by transforming tolerance into demonstrated municipal and community respect for, and acceptance of, diversity. Further, this commitment provides the City of Brockville with a platform to demonstrate its existing commitment to diversity in the community. This declaration allows Brockville to brand an image of the reality that already exists in the community—that of a warm, welcoming, and inclusive city. This positive public image could impact the attraction of business opportunities as well as new residents and the related economic benefits that accompany such interests. This commitment provides the City of Brockville with additional supportive language to assist in the enhancement of the community’s local, regional, national, and global profile while simultaneously providing further substantive evidence regarding the City’s commitment to the corporate values of Brockville as initially introduced in the 2009 Corporate Plan exercise.
As a member of CCMARD, the City of Brockville will join a well-respected and acknowledged global network of regions, organization, nations, and cities that have committed to making the world a more just, equal, and fair place. Brockville and Canada are unique in this global village as the network is comprised of six regional coalitions: Europe, Africa, Asia and Pacific, Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and, the only nation-level coalition, Canada. Note that because Canada is the only country-level coalition, individual municipalities like Brockville become recognized world leaders on action against racism and discrimination on the global stage through their commitment to CCMARD.

Background The International Coalition of Cities Against Racism was launched in 2004 by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) was part of the Organization’s follow-up strategy to the World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, 2001). The goal of this international coalition is to establish a network of cities interested in sharing their experiences in order to improve their policies against racism, discrimination, exclusion and intolerance. In January 2005 a pan Canadian working group was formed and Canadian municipalities began to be invited to join this larger international movement by signing a Declaration and making a commitment to the Canadian Coalition Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD). The main objective of CCMARD is to address the need for a platform to broaden and strengthen the ability to protect and promote human rights through coordinated and shared responsibility among local governments, civil society organizations and other democratic institutions. The creation of CCMARD is based on the common desire to achieve these two goals:

- Share experiences and lessons learned with others;
- Strengthen policies to counter all forms of discrimination to achieve greater social inclusion.

No funds are required to join CCMARD and the scope of the Plan of Action each municipality commits to is unique and determined by the community itself meaning that all aspects of the Plan of Action are undertaken solely by the municipality to reflect CCMARD’s Ten Common Commitment outlined below.

The Municipality as a Guardian of Public Interest

1. Increase vigilance against systemic and individual racism and discrimination.
2. Monitor racism and discrimination in the community more broadly as well as municipal actions taken to address racism and discrimination.
3. Inform and support individuals who experience racism and discrimination.
4. Support police services in their attempts to be exemplary institutions in combatting racism and discrimination.

The Municipality as an Organization in the Fulfillment of Human Rights

5. Provide equal opportunities as a municipal employer, service provider and contractor.
6. Support measures to promote equity in the labour market.
7. Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity housing.

The Municipality as a Community Sharing Responsibility for Respecting and Promoting Human Rights and Diversity

8. Involve citizens by giving them a voice in anti-racism initiatives and decision-making.
9. Support measures to challenge racism and discrimination and promote diversity and equal opportunity in the education sector and in other form of learning.
10. Promote respect, appreciation and understanding of cultural diversity and the inclusion of Aboriginal and racialized communities into the cultural fabric of the municipality.

ANALYSIS

Joining CCMARD means that the City of Brockville commits to becoming an even more welcoming and inclusive community—a commitment that has its own related benefits including: Improved Community Life: A welcoming and inclusive community is one in which all citizens feel able to actively participate in the economic, social and cultural aspects of the community without encountering barriers due to discrimination. This involvement from diverse community members leads to an enriched, safer and more cohesive life in the municipality.

Improved Economic Life of the Municipality: Municipalities that are committed to creating a welcoming community by combatting racism and other forms of discrimination are in a better position to attract and retain immigrants, Aboriginal peoples and underrepresented populations in the workforce. Increased Efficiency: Improved efficiency due to reduced racism and discrimination in a municipality includes improved service delivery, fewer complaints to Council and reduced liability in the event of complaints based on discrimination. Improved Response: Municipalities that have devoted time and attention to address racism and other forms of discrimination in their community are better prepared and more effective in their response should an event of discrimination occur. Municipalities benefit from their membership in CCMARD in myriad ways. Some of the these benefits are listed below.

- Increased access to a network of municipalities throughout Canada and the world that promotes the sharing of best practices and resources to combat racism and other forms of discrimination;
- Increased legitimacy and support for anti-racism and diversity initiatives through being part of international UNESCO-led network of cities;
- Strengthened partnerships with local organizations, business and individuals concerned about discrimination;
- More in-depth understanding of local realities and increased community committee through the development of a Plan of Action with the involvement of diverse community stakeholders;
• Increased sustainability and documentation of anti-discrimination initiatives through the creation and implementation of a Plan of Action that is approved by Council;
• Increased accountability to citizens through the implementation and ongoing evaluation of the municipal Plan of Action;
• Increased trust, loyalty, and respect towards the municipality from employees and citizens as a result of the municipality’s public commitment to actions that foster greater equality, inclusion and appreciation for diversity.

The proposed action is supported by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities which has encouraged its members to join. In addition, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies have supported the initiative since its launch. Other agencies that support municipal involvement is CCMARD include:

• The Racism-Free Workplace Strategy, HRSDC – Labour Program
• Human Rights Commissions in Alberta, Ontario, and Saskatchewan
• The Union des Municipalités du Québec
• The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association,
• The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities
• The National Association of Friendship Centres

Research chairs, federal and provincial ministries and agencies as well as an important number of local stakeholders complete the network.

We will join our close neighbour cities, Kingston and Belleville, and 63 other Canadian cities, in this Coalition. Brockville already meets the three broad commitment categories related to being a municipality against racism and discrimination: 1) The Municipality as a guardian of public interest; 2) The Municipality as an organization in the fulfillment of human rights and; 3) The Municipality as a community sharing responsibility for respecting and promoting human rights and diversity. The City therefore only has to ratify this commitment in this formal declaration. Practically, joining CCMARD involves the City of Brockville: Adopting a resolution to join; Informing the Canadian Commission for UNESCO; and then Celebrating and declaring Brockville’s involvement through a signing ceremony or other special event. An elected official contact as well as a municipal staff contact will need to be named as primary CCMARD contacts and may choose to take the lead on the City of Brockville’s Plan of action.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As mentioned previously, no funds are required to join CCMARD and the scope of the Plan of Action each municipality commits to is unique and determined by the community itself meaning that all aspects of the Plan of Action are undertaken solely by the municipality to reflect CCMARD’s Ten Common Commitment outlined above. Each municipal Plan of Action is specific to the community itself and can be as large or small as the stakeholders deem appropriate.
CONCLUSIONS

The City of Brockville is in an excellent position to declare its commitment to combatting racism and all forms of discrimination to the international community by joining the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination. In doing so, Brockville will build on its benchmark reputation as a tolerant city and enhance this commitment to the people of Brockville and to any newcomers to Brockville, by transforming tolerance into demonstrated municipal and community respect for, and acceptance and celebration of, diversity.
Appendix D: Leeds & Grenville Immigration Partnership’s Brockville Cultural Business Ambassador Program (Pilot Proposal)

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Brockville Cultural Business Ambassador Program: 2014-15 Pilot

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Existing Program overview

A Cultural Business Ambassador program exists in the City of Brockville, and the following points give an overview of its features, and also, ideas for the future of the program.

• program has had up to 125 Ambassadors
• communications with Ambassadors has included social media updates, e-newsletters, phone and email communications, invitations to forums, manufacturing roundtables, and updates at City related committee meetings.
• these communications are not happening frequently enough; they should occur at least once/month to keep the ‘attraction’ goal at the forefront of Ambassadors’ minds. A communications plan may help to accomplish this task. An annual event for all Ambassadors and relevant players would be helpful for fostering program momentum.
• the Economic Development office is and should remain the main point of contact for Ambassadors; other contacts i.e. Chamber of Commerce will be provided based on need.
• Business Ambassadors currently consist of business owners (immigrant and nonimmigrant), young local professionals, general public, teachers, international students, prospects, clients, developers etc.
• suggestion is to have 1 Business Ambassador per local cultural group with one additional substitute per culture for broader outreach and back up; Economic Development would like to become involved in two events/culture/year • commit to a program focused on Cultural Business Ambassadors only, with the thought of expanding to various sectors (young families, retirees etc.) at a later date
• financial resources and time constraints create challenges in gaining program momentum
• social media is likely the best way to build an awareness for the need of Business Ambassadors in Brockville
• ambassadors can provide a role in the evaluation of the program and determining its’ success level. Their role can also extend to the aftercare and retention of new arrivals.
• it is important to discuss the possibility of educational contacts as Ambassadors for the City as they are a gateway to new immigrants.
• the best way to recruit an Ambassador is a personal ask by the right person. The ‘who and when’ needs to be identified.
• a roundtable discussion with existing contacts would help to identify additional individuals.
the selection of Ambassadors should be by a task group formed to assess their qualifications and potential contributions. The process would mirror that of an application/interview process for a new employee.

**Purpose of cultural Business ambassador Program**

The bones of a Brockville Cultural Business Ambassador (BCBA) program are in place, but additional efforts attention could formalize the program into one that produces an increased number of leads being directed to Economic Development staff and a corresponding rise of investments in the community. The BCBA program will enable identified Ambassadors to spread the word about the positive attributes of the community, and promote the City of Brockville as a smart place to invest.

“The best way to land immediate credibility to an investment location and make it stand out from the crowd is with a recommendation or success story from a peer.” —Ambassadors: Your Secret Marketing Weapon. EDAC White Paper Series, June 2009

**Proposed Steps for Program development Recruitment of Cultural Business Ambassadors**

Ambassadors could be all or one of the following:

- Leaders from business and the community, holding strong affiliations with local cultural communities and possibly, provincial, national or international associations/organizations. Access to their contacts, membership privileges and attendance at trade shows is important.
- High profile cultural community members (past and present) with recognition and credibility beyond the community.
- Former local cultural community members who can promote the community in their new place of residence.
- A cultural community member who has a passion for the community and have demonstrated their commitment to it through their involvement and support for local initiatives.  How to Recruit:
  - Determine what local cultural communities the City would like to develop further relationships with (Indian, Chinese, Greek, Filipino, Pakistani, Vietnamese etc.)
  - Brainstorm list of potential Ambassadors (1 or 2 key members to represent each cultural community); do they meet the criteria listed above?
  - Determine best way to request their involvement in the program (personal request, email blitz, public information event etc.), and how they should indicate their interest (application process, verbal ‘ok’ etc.)
  - Evaluate applications (first, determine evaluation process)
  - Connect with chosen Ambassadors and invite them to training/orientation session.
Development of Tools and Training

($ indicates need for financial resources)

-$ Training sessions for all new Ambassadors (one on one with Economic Development staff, group sessions etc.) to give overview of Brockville benefits, how to communicate with ED staff regarding leads/follow up etc., understanding key information about City (any marketing strategies, upcoming/hot opportunities etc.)

-$ New web page outlining BCBA program; could stem from Economic Development page on City of Brockville website. Web page could include Ambassador profiles, information about how to join program, benefits of joining, roles and responsibilities of an Ambassador etc., list of top 5 reasons to choose Brockville etc.

-$ Summary of important information/popular FAQs about Brockville—print out and soft copies made available, easily accessible online resources for when they are travelling. Obtain feedback from Ambassadors—what information do they need?

-$ Brockville business card with photo, contact details of Ambassador, back of card could contain top 5 reasons to invest in Brockville

-$ Lapel pin or other means to identify them as Ambassadors

Identify opportunities for Ambassadors to use reference tools (listed above) in a networking and educational capacity and to connect Economic Development staff with their networks.

• As Economic Development staff want to become involved in local cultural events via Ambassadors, these opportunities should also be identified and the role of City staff should be secured.

• Ambassadors should be the ones to identify networking opportunities (trade shows, conferences, industry publications, conferences etc.) and commit to their roles at each event.

• Ensure Economic Development staff know of these commitments and touch base with each Ambassador prior to, and following events. Ensure Ambassador has materials and support they need to represent Brockville well. Involving Ambassadors in prospecting

• Ambassadors will provide Economic Development staff with leads from their networking efforts.

• Ideally, the Ambassadors will also become involved with follow up meetings, familiarization tours etc. which will provide a familiar face to prospective investors, encouraging deeper discussions and further questions etc. Ongoing communications with Ambassadors is critical to keep the program top-of-mind for them.

• Develop a simple communications plan with timelines and roles of various players ie. Economic Development staff.

• Good idea to share Ambassador success stories with other Ambassadors to inspire and encourage their commitment. (Dedicate a section of the e-newsletter to the Ambassador program?).

• Seek local media coverage to highlight Ambassador successes. Recognizing Ambassadors

• $ Publicly acknowledging Ambassador efforts is critical—media, recognition events and the offering of special events for networking opportunities are options to recognize Ambassador efforts.
- $ Wall of Ambassadors—name on permanent wall plaque at City Hall/Economic Development office. Program Evaluation
- Prior to program initiation, determine key performance indicators
- Who will be involved with the evaluation? Ambassadors? Economic Development staff? LIP Working Group?