Welcoming Communities Initiative: Working to improve the inclusion of visible minorities and immigrants in second and third tier Ontario cities

Education Domain

Domain Members

- Teresa Abada (Western, Sociology)
- Clinton Beckford (Windsor, Faculty of Education)
- Karen Bird (McMaster, Political Science)
- Susan Chuang (Guelph, Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition)
- Ginette Lafréniere (Wilfrid Laurier, Social Work)
- Cynthia Levine-Rasky, Domain Co-Leader (Queen's, Sociology);
- Jerry Paquette (Western, Faculty of Education)
- Saba Saftar (Guelph, Psychology)
- Christine Tardif-Williams (Brock, Child and Youth Studies)
- Shelley Taylor (Western, Faculty of Education)
- Dawn Zinga, Domain Co-Leader (Brock, Social Science/Child and Youth Studies)

Conference Call to Domain Members, October 23/09

Purpose
- 1) developing a team; 2) identifying priorities; 3) creating a description of the domain; (4) developing research proposals.

Summary
- Scope of WCI was described and purpose of funds;
- Proposal for baseline study/studies to collect information on school boards' existing policies affecting immigrant students;
- Other research proposals emerged;
- Revisions were suggested for the education domain description and 'Research Priorities and Policy Development'.

Follow-up Email, October 23, 2009

- Specific requests to (1) review our research proposals and areas; (2) consult with the domain leaders about ongoing planning; (3) collaborate on research grants; (4) secure the cooperation of community, faculty, school board and others in the domain; (5) travel occasionally and to participate in conferences, meetings, and workshops as they may arise; (6) contact graduate students and funding bodies in preparation for moving forward; (7) send us a short bio for the WCI website

Description of Domain

In Canada, young people are confronted by a complex social-historical epoch shaped by increasing diversity and globalization reinforced by a multicultural society and intense rates of change in the demographic landscape of both rural and urban centers over the past fifty years. Of all cohorts of Canadian young people, immigrant and racialized youth face the greatest challenges to their developmental trajectories and experience significant problems in the educational system that go beyond marginalization and are characterized among some sub-groups by high dropout rates that range between 60 percent to 80 percent. Much of the research on the educational experiences of newcomer youth has been concentrated in large urban centres with little attention being paid to smaller urban centres that have different needs and resources than larger urban centres. Specifically, schools in smaller urban centres may play a more important role as a hub for integration of immigrants and also ensure more interaction between diverse groups of students from rural, suburban, and urban neighbourhoods within the same school board.

Description, Continued…

School boards in smaller urban centres often have different resource needs and need to employ different programming and strategies to meet the needs of the students and the urban, suburban, and rural contexts. This domain will address this gap in the literature by concentrating on elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational contexts of newcomer youth in smaller urban centres with particular attention given to the unique aspects of those contexts that differ from larger urban centres. While residence in 2nd and 3rd tier cities is common to these students, the domain is attentive to differences among them that include their status in Canada, English, French or other language use, their family's relationship to the local economy, as well as to the intersections between their immigrant status and gender, age, disability, religion, ethnicity, and other subjectively meaningful elements of their identity.

Key Policy and Practice Issues

(from March 2008 meeting)

1. *Identifying successful policies, programs and practices within schools*

- Examine successful policies, programs, and practices that exist in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational institutions within smaller urban centres in Ontario and the reasons for their success;

- Examine how issues that emerge from the educational, family, and work experience of newcomer youth and how the education system responds to these issues;

- Examine knowledge from successful policies, programs, and practices may be developed into educational resources/guides and to use this to inform policy at municipal, provincial, and federal levels.

Key Issues, Continued...

2. *The integration of equity and diversity issues in the classroom at all levels*

- Examine how newcomer/racialized students experience and perceive discrimination and racism and how educators and educational staff recognized and address discrimination and racism;

- Examine how the Ontario curriculum addresses issues of equity and diversity and it may be revised to promote equity and the valuing of diversity among Ontario students.

Key Issues, Continued…

3. *Educational outcomes and educational inequalities for immigrant and racialized students*

- Examine newcomer/racialized students' perceptions of their educational experiences;

- Examine response of educational institutions and school boards to the needs of recent immigrant and racialized students in terms of policy and programming;

- Examine the role played by NGOs in educational settings and further development of that involvement;

- Examine how educational experiences are integrated with other domain inquiries such as settlement, justice, health care, income security, housing for recent immigrants and racialized groups.

Key Issues, Continued…

4. *Second language learning practices and policies*

- Examine current provisions for English-language instruction for recent immigrant students;

- Examine current delivery methods for second language learners;

- Examine the perception of second language learning courses and of those students involved in such courses.

Key Issues, Continued…

5. *Approaches to equity and diversity issues in teacher education*

- Examine foreign trained/newcomer/racialized students' perceptions of their educational experiences within teacher education programs and placements;

- Develop education models for teachers and other service providers;

- Examine the role played by NGOs in the development of educational resources for teacher education;

- Examine how issues of equity, diversity and multiculturalism are addressed in current teacher education programs and how materials may be developed.

Proposed Research Priorities and Policy Development

(as of October 23, 2009)

1. CURA Baseline Study # 4 – Minority Students in Post-Secondary Education

- this study is part of the base funding for the CURA and is being done in conjunction with Academica Group who already have a dataset of Ontario applicants to college/university;

- statistical analysis of the dataset and qualitative interviews;

- more information will be available as this project is developed.

Priorities, Continued…

2. Education Domain Baseline Inventories

- For each school board and faculty of education within the WCI's geographical areas of focus, the creation of an inventory of existing policies affecting immigrant students: policies and programs associated with racial and ethnocultural diversity among students and teachers in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educational settings;

- Components of inventories will include: diversity policies; the presence of diversity officers and programming; language learning policies and programming; curricula; staffing; enrolment (for teacher candidates in Faculties of Education); leadership; cultural programs; integration initiatives; extra-curricular programs for immigrant families;

- For each school board represented by domain members, the creation of a list of contacts of people involved in education issues affecting immigrant students. This could involve a list of 'diversity officers' as well as faculty, NGO, political leaders, teachers and administrators who agree to serve as a domain contact for purposes of access to research sites, resources, participants.

Priorities, Continued…

3.   Experiences of Foreign-Trained and Racialized Teacher Candidates

•   Primarily a qualitative study that examines the experiences of foreign-trained and racialized teacher candidates including: experiences in Faculties of Education, completion of their programs; placement or practica experiences; experiences in finding employment through supply lists, part-time positions, and permanent positions;

•   Data collection will emphasize interviews, participatory research, and community-based research;

•   Research design will take into account differences between recent and established immigrant teacher candidates, refugees, Francophones, and teacher candidates' relationships to local conditions, as well as to the intersections between immigrant status and gender, age, disability, religion, ethnicity, and other subjectively meaningful elements of our participants' identities.

•   It is expected to be a multi-site study.

Priorities, Continued…

4. The Educational Experiences of Immigrant and Racialized Students
- Primarily a qualitative study that examines the experiences of foreign-trained and racialized students within elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational institutions;
- Focus on educational inequalities involving their treatment and conditions in school, programs in which they participate such as special education, 'streaming' of secondary students into vocational or academic programs, likelihood of dropping out, disciplinary practices;
- Data collection will emphasize interviews, participatory research, and community-based research;
- Research design will take into account differences between recent and established immigrant students, refugees, Francophones, and students' relationships to local conditions, as well as to the intersections between immigrant status and gender, age, disability, religion, ethnicity, and other subjectively meaningful elements of our participants' identities.
- it is expected to be a multi-site study.

Proposed involvement of stakeholders

- Establish strong links to school boards and faculties of education, local governments, NGOs, other programs

- Capacity building at the local level

- Build on existing mechanisms for partnership and engagement with school boards, settlement organizations, youth organizations, and social service organizations

- Establish capacity, time, and resources to respond to Requests for Proposals

- Use graduate students who have the skills to follow through

Possibilities for project support

- Cash and in-kind contributions from WCI, WCI university partners, and School Boards
- Standard granting agencies such as SSHRC, CIHR, and all levels of government including municipal sources and agencies such as local economic development organizations
- Targeted federal government grants, eg. Heritage Canada, CIC, HRSDC
- Provincial funding sources: Healthy Communities, Trillium Foundation
- University/institutional funding possibilities including hiring assistance for graduate and undergraduate students
- Ontario Chamber of Commerce
- Specialized grants (eg. Canadian Council on Learning)
- Multiyear funding to ensure continuity of activities
- Assist community organizations raise funds for research