Report on Pre-Arrival Services in Western Canada

Prepared for:
Western Region Working Group (WRWG)

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ACRONYMS

AB	Alberta
AEIP	Active Engagement and Integration Program
BC	British Columbia
CCCN	Canadian Culture and Communication for Nurses
CELPIP	Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program
CICan	Colleges and Institutes Canada
CLB	Canadian Language Benchmarks
COA	Canadian Orientation Abroad
COSTI	Centro Organizzativo Scuole Tecniche Italiane (Organizational Center Technical Schools Italian)
CRIEC	Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council
CIIP	Canadian Immigration Integration Program
EMCN	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
ESL	English as a Second Language
FASTBC	Facilitating Access to Skilled Trades in British Columbia
FFP	Focal Point Partner
FQR	Foreign Qualification Recognition
ICTC	Information and Communication Technology Council
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRCC	Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada
IRCOM	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba
ISANS	Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
ISO	Immigrant-serving Organization
ISS	Immigrant Services Society
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
MB	Manitoba

N.E.E.D.S.	Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services
PAC	The Pre-Arrival Centre
PASS	Pre-Arrival Supports and Services
PSI	Post-Secondary Institution
RMP	Ready for Manitoba Program
RP	Referral Partner
SERC	Sexuality Education Resource Centre Manitoba
SK	Saskatchewan
SP	Service Partner
SODS	Saskatoon Open Door Society
USA	United States of America
WELARC	Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre

GLOSSARY

Active Engagement and Integration Program (AEIP)

Active Engagement and Integration Program (AEIP) is a pre-arrival initiative of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. of British Columbia funded by Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). AEIP provides free overseas pre-landing orientations, themed workshops, individual and family consultation, accreditation and referral services to prospective immigrants. The program has overseas stations in China, South Korea and Taiwan.

Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP)

Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP) is a pre-arrival program developed and implemented by Colleges and Institute Canada (CICan) with the financial support from Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Launched in 2007, CIIP provides free pre-departure orientation to economic immigrants, their spouses and dependents while they are still in their country of origin and at the final stages of the immigration process. The Canadian Immigrant Integration Program provides one-day group orientation workshops, one-hour individual settlement and career planning sessions (one and a half hours for families), and online advice to clients. The program regional offices in China, India, and the Philippines. A mobile team of the program provides orientations in various other locations as well.

Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA)

Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) is a pre-arrival information and orientation program funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in over 35 countries across the globe. Launched in 1998 COA is offered to visa-ready refugees, economic and family class immigrants, including their spouses and dependants.

Canadian Orientation Abroad offers separate orientation packages for refugees and immigrants. Orientation to refugees consists of a three–day program (or a five-day program for camp-based refugees) focusing primarily on travel preparation and initial settlement, dispelling rumours and presenting a realistic picture of the settlement and integration process. This orientation is delivered in 15 permanent training sites, including: Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Sudan, Sri Lanka and Turkey. Many of these sites offer mobile sessions in their respective regions, covering a vast number of additional countries in West, East and Southern Africa; as well as Central Asia.

Orientation to Economic Immigrants and Family Class immigrants is provided through the Planning for Canada initiative, which is implemented in partnership with the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP). COA provides orientation and support to Economic Immigrants and Family Class immigrants

through 8 permanent training sites, including: Colombia, Lebanon, Nigeria, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Ukraine. A few of these sites provide mobile orientation sessions in neighbouring countries including Haiti, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Russia.

Focal Point Partners

Focal Point Partners are the locally based first points of referral from the Planning for Canada Program. Through the Planning for Canada initiative, COA and CIIP fund up to 15 Focal Point Partners (FPPs) in Canada to provide direct client support to prospective immigrants. Services provided by the FPPs include individualized information and online orientation, as well as referrals to local partners.

Planning for Canada

Planning for Canada is a Government of Canada funded pre-arrival program jointly delivered by CIIP and COA. The program targets Economic and Family Class immigrants and provides information, resources and Canadian contacts while prospective immigrants prepare to move to Canada. The service components of Planning for Canada include: (a) a full day group orientation session on preparing for life in Canada; (b) personalized one-hour planning session on career and settlement goals, called My Action Plan-MAP; (c) referral to Canadian organizations (Focal Point Partners or Referral/Platform Partners) for additional guidance and support; (d) access to specialized online information sessions. COA and CIIP operate different sites in different locations, but they provide the exact same, consistent suite of pre-arrival services, collaborating in building one, and solid set of resources for all clients.

Platform Partners

Planning for Canada identifies some Canadian agencies as Platform Partners which provide pre-arrival services as well as receive referral from Planning for Canada. Following the individualized needs assessment offered through Planning for Canada, Planning for Canada refers all Economic and Family Class immigrants to Platform Partners, based on the applicable eligibility criteria (i.e. occupation, province or city of destination, etc.). Through the Planning for Canada initiative, COA and CIIP work with over 35 Platform Partners in Canada.

Pre-Arrival Supports and Services (PASS)

Pre-Arrival Supports and Services (PASS) is a pre-arrival program initiated by Care Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses and the program is financed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The program targets internationally educated nurses who are migrating to Canada and provides online training on nursing occupation-specific language and communication training, live information and orientation webinars on the nursing registration process and the Canadian Healthcare System and preparation for a nursing career in Canada, and career path mentoring.

Regional Newcomer Gateways

Regional Newcomer Gateways are welcome centres for newcomers arriving in Saskatchewan. They help individuals and families with information and guidance if they are new in their regions. Although they do not have formal contract with CIIP or COA, they receive pre-arrival referrals from CIIP and COA. Regional Newcomer Gateways send pre-arrival welcome letters to prospective Saskatchewan-bound immigrants referred to them by CIIP or COA. Although clients are not encouraged to seek services from the Gateways pre-arrival, their contact information and link to their websites are provided in the letters. If clients require services pre-arrival, the Gateways serve them.

Service Delivery Partners

The concept Service Delivery Partner particularly pertains to COA's service delivery arrangement for the Youth Refugee Program in partnership with YWCA associations in greater Toronto, Halifax, Ottawa, Vancouver and Winnipeg.

Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA)

Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA) is an online hub providing guidance and personalized pre-employment supports for immigrants destined to Canada. Initiated and implemented by Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) in early 2016, the program is delivered in partnership with five other settlement agencies in Canada: Altered Minds Inc. (Manitoba), Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (Alberta), MOSAIC (British Columbia), Catholic Centre for Immigrants (Ontario) and Regina Open Door Society (Saskatchewan). Services include information and orientation, needs assessment, developing action plan, referral to settlement agencies in the intended locations and online courses designed to promote settlement and economic integration skills of potential immigrants to Canada.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The study was initiated by the Western Regional Working Group (WRWG) and conducted by Immigration Research West (IRW) at the University of Manitoba.

- The primary objectives of the study were to learn about pre-arrival service agencies located in the Western region of Canada, the services they provide, and the arrangements through which they deliver services.

- The survey research method was used to conduct the research. Participants for the study were identified through using the snowball sampling technique. A survey questionnaire containing both open-ended and closed ended questions was administered among the participants. Total eighteen (18) pre-arrival service agencies from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan participated in the study. The survey was supplemented by internet research.

- Total six categories of pre-arrival services were identified in the Western Canada. These include: information and orientation, advice and guidance, employment services and support, settlement services and support, referrals, and community connections

- All three types of pre-arrival service programs (national, agency and Focal Point or Referral Partner) are available in the Western Canada. The only national program located in the western region (AEIP of S.U.C.C.E.S.S-BC) is based in British Columbia. Agency programs are mostly concentrated in British Columbia and Manitoba. Programs in Alberta and Saskatchewan are generally Focal Point Partners, Referral Partners or Service Partners of national or agency programs located either in the western region (such as AEIP of S.U.C.C.E.S.S-BC) or in the non-western region (such as Planning for Canada and SOPA).

- Pre-arrival services may be ordered into two major categories based on their focus of programming,: (a) primarily information-focused programs and (b) information and active employability enhancing programs.

- Three programs in the Western Canada have overseas offices. These are S.U.C.C.E.S.S.-AEIP, India2Canada (Abbotsford Community Services), and Ready for Manitoba (University of Manitoba).

- Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) and Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP) individually and through their joint initiative, Planning for Canada, play a dominant role as the first point of contact and in providing pre-arrival orientations to immigrants destined to the western region of Canada, and Focal Point Partners and many agency programs located in the western region partner with Planning for Canada, COA, or CIIP to receive referrals from them.

- Pre-arrival services use a large variety of measures to reach pre-arrival clients. In terms of the measures they use for client recruitment, pre-arrival services can be ordered into four categories: (a) those fully depend on referrals from partners; (b) those mainly depend on clients' online presence; (c)

those mainly work with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) overseas visa offices; finally (d) those use multiple approaches.

- Online technologies, email, and telephone are the most commonly used methods used by agencies located in the western Canada in delivering pre-arrival services. Among the online devices, Skype is most popularly used. Face-to-face methods are used only by those services that have offices overseas. Email is the most commonly used method among the referral partners.

- In most cases, pre-arrival services are separate wings of settlement service organizations that also provide post-arrival immigrant services. There are only few agencies in the Western Canada that provide only pre-arrival services.

- Pre-arrival immigrants are reportedly most interested in three types of services: settlement information, employment-related information, and employment-related pre-arrival services.

- Partnership and collaboration are integral parts of pre-arrival services in Western Canada. Pre-arrival providers partner among themselves primarily for three purposes: pre-arrival client recruitment, delivery of services, and referral.

- Generally partnerships among pre-arrival services take two forms: unidirectional top-down partnership and multidirectional collaborations.

- Pre-arrival services in Western Canada face diverse challenges which can be roughly ordered into six categories. These include challenges with recruiting clients, service delivery, resources, partnering, programming arrangements, and staffing.

INTRODUCTION

An Inventory of Pre-arrival Services in Western Canada was a short-term research initiative of Western Regional Working Group, which was conducted by Immigration Research West. The Project started in January 2016 and ended in March 2016. Despite the short timeline, this project sought to address pressing issues related to pre-arrival services in the Canadian context.

Pre-arrival immigrant services have emerged as a very popular topic in Canada in the recent years. This probably relates to the Government of Canada's recent emphasis on pre-arrival services as a means to support fast and seamless integration of immigrants into the Canadian labour market and society. Immigrants serving professionals, academics, and those interested in immigrating to Canada are now more willing to learn about pre-arrival services. However, there are confusions among many in regards to what constitutes pre-arrival services, whom they target, who provides them and how. The primary objectives of the study were to address some of those conceptual confusions and understand pre-arrival services in the Western Canada. This report sheds lights on the processes through which the research was conducted and the findings of the research.

There are five sections in this report. Section 1 introduces to the Western Regional Working Group which initiated this study and Immigration Research West that conducted it. Section 2 specifies the scope of the study. Section 3 identifies the main goals of the projects and briefly sheds lights on the need for pre-arrival services for Canadian immigrants, the meaning of pre-arrival services and targets of pre-arrival services in Canada to contextualize the identified research goals. The fourth section reflects on the methodologies applied in conducting the research. Findings of the research are presented in section 5.

SECTION ONE: WESTERN REGIONAL WORKING GROUP (WRWG) AND IMMIGRATION RESEARACH WEST (IRW)

1.1 Western Regional Working Group

The Western Region Working Group (WRWG) represents the Western Canada's settlement and integration sector by working in a collaborative interprovincial/territorial effort. Umbrella organizations in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Yukon form the membership of the WRWG. The group provides policy, program and process recommendations to address settlement needs and gaps in the Western Region.

1.2 Immigration Research West

Immigration Research West (IRW), is a research group with an office at the University of Manitoba under the direction of Dr. Lori Wilkinson, Professor of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. The purpose of this group is to enhance research capacity of faculty and students and to work with service providers and government offices to enhance our knowledge of the settlement experiences and outcomes of newcomers to British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, Nunavut and Northwest Territories. Research activities undertaken by IRW focus on citizenship, immigration, settlement and cohesion between immigrants and Canadians who have settled in the west and north of Canada.

SECTION TWO: PROJECT SCOPE

The project primarily investigated into the following issues:

(1) Pre-arrival services in the Western Canada
(2) Pre-arrival service providing agencies located in the Western Canada
(3) Pre-arrival service delivery arrangement in the Western Canada
(4) Challenges with pre-arrival services in the Western Canadian contexts

SECTION THREE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND MAIN GOALS

3.1 Contextualizing Pre-Arrival Services for Canadian Immigrants

Canada is known as a country of immigrants. It has one of the highest rates of migration intensity (new immigrants per 1000) of any country in the world (second only to Australia) (Canadian International Development Platform, 2016). Hundreds of thousands of immigrants come to Canada every year. In the recent years, the number of permanent residents that Canada has admitted has consistently remained above 220,000. Immigrants now represent about one-fifth of Canada's population.

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Immigration is vital to Canada's population growth and economic prosperity. Currently, migratory increase accounts for 67% of Canada's population growth, and a projection by Statistics Canada (2015) suggests that from 2030, migratory increase will account for 80% of Canada's population growth.[1] Moreover, a large percentage of every province's immigrants are in the 20-to-44 age group, a cohort that constitutes most of the labour force.

A common realization is that to gain the maximum benefits of immigration, successful and seamless economic and social integration of immigrants is important. However, immigrants do not have uniform experiences in integrating into the Canadian labour force. While there is growing demand for skilled workers, yet many immigrants remain unemployed. Many newcomers take a long time to integrate into the labour force effectively; again, there are many who struggle for years to find a job where they can apply their skills and qualifications. There are many who simply fail or return to their countries of origin.

As a means to promote seamless and early economic and social integration of immigrants, pre-arrival immigrant services are given more emphasis in recent years. The government of Canada is allocating more funding on pre-arrival services. It is assumed that the more prepared immigrants are during their pre-departure stage, the better their chances are of success in integrating upon arrival. As Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) expresses this hope around pre-arrival services in its 2014 *Funding Guidelines* for pre-arrival services:

> "Pre-arrival services are expected to facilitate faster and more efficient economic and social integration of newcomers to Canada by effectively addressing needs earlier in the integration continuum and improving linkages between pre-arrival and domestic (in-Canada) services" – IRCC (2014).

3.2 Defining Pre-Arrival Services

Pre-arrival services are referred to services that are provided to immigrants before their departure from their home countries for Canada. Through pre-arrival services immigrants are informed and educated about Canadian life and society and the skills they need to integrate into the Canadian labour force when they are still in their countries of origin. Pre-arrival services are aimed at providing immigrants opportunities to arrive more prepared.

Pre-arrival services primarily address two types of needs of immigrants:

a) Immigrants' need to understand the necessities for settlement in Canada or in the intended location of settlement in Canada
b) Immigrants' need to close the preparedness gap by starting key settlement tasks before arriving in Canada (Chartwell Inc. & CREHS, 2007).

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[1] Migratory increase is the difference between the number of immigrants entering the country and the number of emigrants leaving the country (Statistics Canada, 2015).

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3.3 Targets of Pre-arrival Services

Generally, immigrants who are at the final stages of immigration process are the targets of pre-arrival services. These stages are commonly referred to as the pre-arrival period. According to Chartwell Inc. & CREHS (2007), the time between when immigrants receive a formal notification from IRCC and when they depart their countries for Canada is the pre-arrival period. Pre-arrival services are designed to enhance preparedness of immigrants during the pre-arrival period so that their post-arrival transition period is smoother, easier, and shorter.
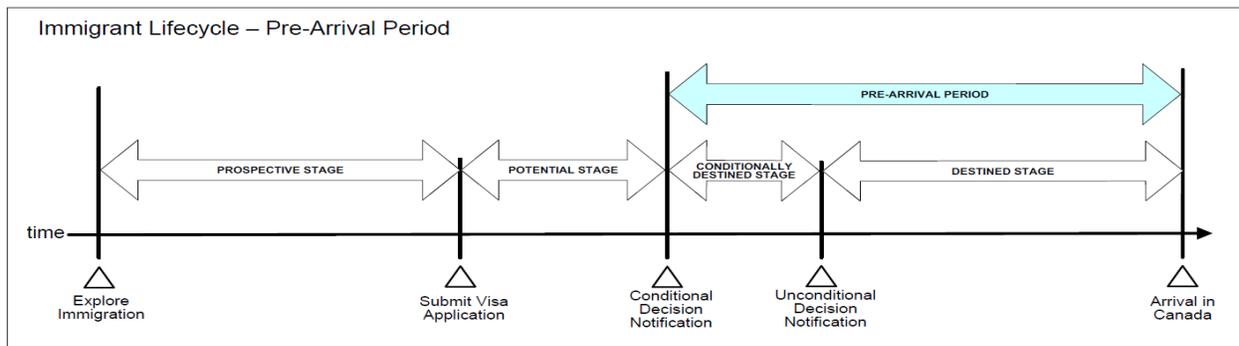
Figure 1: Immigrant Lifecycle – Pre-Arrival Period; Extracted from Chartwell Inc. & CREHS (2007)

For Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada funded pre-arrival services, only those individuals who have been selected to become Permanent Residents by IRCC are eligible to access. That is, the IRCC funded pre-arrival services cover those Individuals or their dependents who are:

- Permanent Residents of Canada;
- Protected Persons as defined in Section 95 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act;
- Immigrants pending medical examinations or security verifications and who have been informed, by a letter or other documentation from IRCC;
- Convention refugees and protected persons outside Canada who have been selected for resettlement in Canada by IRCC;
- Temporary foreign workers who hold or received approval of a work permit as Live-in-Caregivers (IRCC, 2014).

Of course, there are individual services agencies which use additional criterion of accessibility to their programs. These may include, occupational background and interest, levels of English language skills, faith, intended location of settlement, and access to computer and internet.

3.4 Types of Pre-Arrival Services Programs

There are three major types of pre-arrival services: (1) National Programs; (2) Agency Programs, and (3) Focal Point or Referral Partners.

1. National Program

National programs are one of the first points of contact for immigrants during the pre-arrival stage. They work directly with Canadian embassies overseas for recruiting clients through their overseas offices or online. The Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP) (implemented by Colleges and Institute Canada-CICan), Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) (implemented by International Organization for Migration (IOM), Planning for Canada (jointly implemented by CIIP and COA) Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA), (implemented by Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), Active Engagement and Integration Program (AEIP) (implemented by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. of British Columbia) are some example of national pre-arrival programs in Canada.

2. Agency Program

Besides the national programs, there are some settlement services agencies or organizations which operate pre-arrival services through their overseas offices or stations in Canada. Some of them also act as the first points of contact for immigrants while they are still abroad. In recruiting clients either they work with Canadian embassies abroad or other organizations in the countries of their overseas operations or they recruit clients online. The India2Canada Program (implemented by Abbotsford Community Services of British Columbia), the Integrating Newcomers Program (implemented by British Columbia Construction Association), The SmartPathways Program (implemented by Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council (CRIEC)), and Pre-Arrival Centre (implemented by Altered Minds of Manitoba) are some examples of agency-based pre-arrival services.

3. Focal Point, Referral, Services Partners

There are agencies that partner with the national or agency programs to recruit clients. Instead of being the first point of contact for immigrants, these programs receive referrals from the national or agency programs and provide localized settlement and integration support to immigrants and refer them to local settlement and community services while they are still abroad.

3.5 Research Objectives

There were four primary objectives of the study:

1. To specify the pre-arrival services available in Western Canada
2. To identify pre-arrival service providing agencies and organizations located in the Western Canada
3. To understand the practices of pre-arrival service deliveries in the Western Canada
4. To identify the challenges associated with pre-arrival service operations in the Western region of Canada

SECTION FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Methods

Survey and internet research methods were applied to collect information to achieve the objectives of the research. A survey was conducted among the pre-arrival service providing agencies based in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, and they were asked about their services, their locations of activity, targeted clients, accessibility criterion for their services, partnership and collaboration with other agencies, and the challenges they face in operating the services. While Yukon was included within the scope of the study, no pre-arrival services in that province were known when the survey was administered. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used in the inquiry. Moreover, internet research was conducted to supplement information about the agencies that participated in the survey and to collect information about those which did not participate in the survey or could not be contacted.

4.2 Sampling

Since many pre-arrival services were in their beginning stages, only few pre-arrival services were initially known. Therefore, a snowball sampling technique was applied to identify pre-arrival services located across the Western Canada. As the first layer of snowballing, provincial associations of settlement services in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan were contacted to provide contact information for pre-arrival services in their provinces as per their knowledge. As the second layer, agencies that were referred by the provincial associations were contacted and requested to provide contact information of other pre-arrival services in their provinces if they were aware of. Finally, a total of twenty seven (27) services were identified and invited to participate. Eighteen (18) agencies participated in the survey. This report is based on the information received from those eighteen participants located in the western Canada.

Table 1: Participants of the Study

Organization	Province
Centre of Excellence in Immigrant and Intercultural Advancement at Bow Valley College	Alberta
Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council (CRIEC)	Alberta
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Alberta
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN)	Alberta
Abbotsford Community Services	British Columbia
British Columbia Construction Association	British Columbia
British Columbia Institute of Technology	British Columbia
Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC)	British Columbia
S.U.C.C.E.S.S.	British Columbia
Altered Minds Inc.	Manitoba
English Online Inc.	Manitoba
Immigrant Centre Manitoba	Manitoba
Jewish Child and Family Services	Manitoba
Diversity and Intercultural Services, Red River College	Manitoba
University of Manitoba	Manitoba
YWCA-Winnipeg	Manitoba
Newcomer Information Centre	Saskatchewan
Regina Open Door Society Inc.	Saskatchewan

4.3 Modes of Survey Administration

The survey was mostly administered by email. Potential participants were given options to participate by email or telephone. All participants save one opted to participate by email. Only one participant was interviewed by telephone.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

The study was approved by the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board. Persons representing their organizations were informed in detail through a letter of *Invitation to Participate* and the *Informed Consent Form* about the objectives of the study, the questions we would be asking them, and that their participation was absolutely voluntary. We also assured the participants of their confidentiality and promised that they would not be identified with the information that they provided us in the reports and other documents that might result from the study.

4.5 Internet Research

Websites of all known pre-arrival services in the Western Canada were consulted to supplement information collected through the surveys and collect information about agencies that did not participate in the study.

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4.6 Limitations

A major limitation of the study was the absence of full participation of pre-arrival services in the study. As a result, we had to depend on secondary information for those agencies that did not participate, and in some instances we did not find adequate information for them. This affected both the inventory and the concept map which were produced based on the study. Many items for the non-participating agencies remained incomplete in those documents due to lack of information.

SECTION FIVE: FINDINGS

5.1 Forms of Pre-arrival Services in the Western Canada

A large number of pre-arrival services are available in the Western Canada. These services can be broadly ordered into six categories: information and orientation, advice and guidance, employment services and support, settlement services and support, referral services, and connecting with communities. Table 1 displays the services that fall into each category.

Table 2: Pre-Arrival Services Available in the Western Canada

Service Type	Services
Information and Orientation	Providing information about life and work in Canada, licensing requirement for trades and professions, tailored information based on destination and occupation, right and responsibilities
Advice and Guidance	Tailored/individualized settlement/action planning, counselling
Employment Services and Support	Training job search strategies, resume building and job interview training, training professional communication and workplace culture, resume reviewing, competence assessment, skill gap training, credential assessment, connecting with employers, mentoring job seekers, information about job opportunities
Settlement Services and Support	Providing information about services and resources in destined location: housing, education, healthcare, transportation, and banking
Referral Services	Need assessment, referral for credential assessment, and referral to local settlement services and community services
Connecting with Communities	Discussion forums of clients, connecting with recent immigrants, local community members, local employers, and local immigrants of the same ethno-cultural background

5.2 Program Types of Pre-Arrival Services in the Western Canada

We find the presence of all three types of pre-arrival service programs in the Western Canada of Canada. Among the programs surveyed one is a national program, nine are agency programs, and eight are Focal Point, Referral, or Service Partners (FFP/RP/SP). The only national program (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.-AEIP) located in the Western Region is based in British Columbia. Agency programs are mostly concentrated in British Columbia and Manitoba. However, while we see almost an even distribution of agency programs and FFP/RP/SPs in Manitoba, programs in British Columbia are mostly agency programs. Programs in Alberta and Saskatchewan are generally Focal Point Partners or Referral Partners of national or agency programs.

Table 3: Program Types in the Western Canada

Program Type	Province			
	Alberta	*British Columbia*	*Manitoba*	*Saskatchewan*
National		(1) S.U.C.C.E.S.S.-AEIP		
Agency Program	(1) SmartPathways & Connector-CREIC	(1) India2Canada-ACS (2) Integrating Newcomers-BCCA (3) International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES)-BCIT (4) Facilitating Access to Skilled Trades in British Columbia (FASTBC)-IEC-BC	(1) English Online Inc. (2) The Pre-Arrival Centre (PAC) (3) Immigrant Centre, MB (4) Jewish Child and Family Services (5) Ready for Manitoba Program (RMP)-UofM	
Focal Point/ Referral/ Service Partner	(1) Bow Valley College-FFP (Planning for Canada) (2) Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)-FFP (Planning for Canada); RP (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.-AEIP); SP (SOPA) (3) Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN)-FFP (Planning for Canada)		(1) Altered Minds Inc.-SP (SOPA) (2) Red River College-FFP (Planning for Canada) (3) YWCA-Winnipeg-SP (COA)	(1) Newcomer Information Centre –ISO Partner (CIIP); RP (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.-AEIP) (2) Regina Open Door Society-SP (SOPA)

5.3 Services Provided by Programs across the Western Canada

While a large variety of services are available in the Western Canada, services provided by individual programs vary from one another. The services provided by Focal Point Partners or Service Partners of national programs are largely uniform across the provinces. While services provided by agency programs have some common components, they also have some unique components. Table 4 specifies the services provided by individual programs across the Western Canada.

Table 4: Program or Agency Specific Services

Province	Program	Services
Alberta	Bow Valley College	Information, guidance and referral services to Calgary-bound immigrants referred by Planning for Canada to Bow Valley College
	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)	Guidance and support (for Calgary and Southern Alberta-bound Planning for Canada clients and Alberta-bound SOPA and AEIP clients)
	Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council (CRIEC)-SmartPathways, Connector	Path planning and e-monitoring services to internationally trained professionals
	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN)	Information, guidance and referral services to Northern Alberta-bound immigrants referred to EMCN by Planning for Canada
British Columbia	Abbotsford Community Services-India2Canada	Overseas pre-arrival orientation, documentation, needs assessment and employment support and services
	British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA)-Integrating Newcomers	Employment and referral support to British Columbia-bound immigrants interested in employment in the BC construction industry
	Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC)-FASTBC	Online competency assessment, gap training, mentoring and job matching services to BC-bound immigrants interested in Carpentry, Automotive Service Technician, Power Engineering
	British Columbia Institute of Technology-ICES	International Credential Evaluation Services
	S.U.C.C.E.S.S-AEIP	Overseas pre-arrival orientation, themed workshop, Individual and family consultations, Foreign-credential recognition, Post-landing connection in Canada, Community Connection services

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Manitoba	Altered Minds Inc.	Information, needs assessment, individualized action plan, referral, settlement and economic integration courses
	English Online	Settlement Information Services
	Immigrant Centre Manitoba-PAC	Tailored settlement plan and Manitoba-specific employment and settlement information both in English and French
	Jewish Child and Family Services	Settlement information, workshop on employment and informational letter with links of available housing supports in Winnipeg for immigrants to Winnipeg's Jewish Community
	Red River College	Manitoba specific settlement information, guidance and referral services to immigrants destined to Manitoba
	University of Manitoba-RMP	Needs assessment and orientation, individualized settlement plan, employment in Manitoba Workshop, Learn about Manitoba Online Video Series and live webinars
	YWCA-Winnipeg-Youth Refugee Program	Online information and referral support to Manitoba-bound refugee youth
Saskatchewan	Newcomer Information Centre	Information and orientation to Saskatchewan-bound immigrants referred by partnering pre-arrival services agencies
	Regina Open Door Society (RODS)	Information, needs assessment, individualized action plan, referral, settlement and economic integration courses

It is observed that settlement information, needs assessment, settlement plan development and referral are the most commonly provided pre-arrival services across the Western Canada. There are few programs that have components aiming at enhancing employability of immigrants at their pre-arrival stages, which is very important for faster economic integration of immigrants. Therefore, based on focuses of programming, pre-arrival services may be ordered into two major categories: (a) primarily information-focused programs and (b) information and active employability enhancing programs. Table 5 identifies these two categories of programs.

Table 5: Categories of Programs based on Service Priorities

Information-Focused Programs	Active Employability Enhancing Programs
Bow Valley College Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers Abbotsford Community Services-India2Canada S.U.C.C.E.S.S-AEIP English Online Immigrant Centre Manitoba-PAC Jewish Child and Family Services Red River College University of Manitoba-RMP YWCA-Winnipeg-Youth Refugee Program Newcomer Information Centre	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) British Columbia Construction Association (Integrating Newcomers) Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC)-FASTBC Altered Minds Inc. Regina Open Door Society (RODS)

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5.4 Services with Overseas Offices

Among the participants of the study, three (3) have offices overseas. Among them two – S.U.C.C.E.S.S.-AEIP and India2Canada (Abbotsford Community Services) are based in British Columbia and the other (Ready for Manitoba of University of Manitoba) is based in Manitoba. S.U.C.C.E.S.S.-AEIP has offices in China, South Korea, and Taiwan. India2Canada has an office in India, and Ready for Manitoba has an office in the Philippines.

Table 6: Overseas Offices of Pre-Arrival Services

S.U.C.C.E.S.S.-AEIP	India2Canada	Ready for Manitoba
China office 11th Floor, Building D, 18 South Zhongguancub Road, Haidan District Beijing, China 100081 Telephone: +86-10-6216-6928 Email address: AEIPBeijing@success.bc.ca Website: www.aeipsuccess.ca South Korea office Unit 701 DooBee building, JeongDong 11-3, JungGu, Seoul, South Korea 04518 Telephone: +82-2-775-8983 Fax: +82-2-776-8985 Email address: AEIPSeoul@success.bc.ca Website: www.aeipsuccess.ca Taiwan office 12th Floor, No. 6 Zhong Xiao West Road, Sec. 1 Taipei, Taiwan, 100 Telephone: +886-2-2389-9088 Fax: +886-2-2389-9078 Email address: AEIPTaipei@success.bc.ca Website: www.aeipsuccess.ca	India Office B-412, Fourth Floor, Elante Offices, Industrial Area Phase 1, Chandigarh, India 160002 Telephone: +91-708-707-0902, +91-172-506-0156 Email address: info@india2canada.ca Website: www.india2canada.ca	Philippine Office Rufino Pacific Tower, Level 26-A, 6784 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Metro Manila, 1226, Philippines Telephone: (011632) 917 8163 Fax: (011632) 917 8169

5.5 Measures Used by Services to Reach Pre-Arrival Clients

Services use a large variety of measures to reach pre-arrival clients. These include seeking cooperation from Canadian Embassies abroad and IRCC overseas offices, partnering with other pre-arrival services, ethno-cultural organizations and local educational institutions in the foreign nations, use of social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) and websites, circulation of posters and brochures, webinar presentations, presentations in job fairs and similar events, publishing newsletters, press release and magazine articles, outreach activities (meeting with community groups, settlement and language services providers and ethno-cultural groups) and words of mouth.

However, client recruitment approaches are not uniform across the services. While some services use simply their websites, there are services that use diverse approaches to reach their clients. Broadly services can be ordered into four groups in terms of the measures they use for client recruitment: (a) those fully depend of referrals from partners; (b) those mainly depend on clients' online presence; (c) those mainly work with IRCC overseas visa offices; finally (d) those use multiple approaches.

Table 7: Categories of Services in terms of Client Recruitment Approaches

Fully Dependent on Referral	Dependent on Clients' Online Presence	Collaborate with IRCC Overseas Visa Offices	Use Multiple Recruitment Measures
Calgary Catholic Immigrant Services Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council Newcomer Information Centre-Saskatoon Red River College-Winnipeg	English Online	S.U.C.C.E.S.S.-AEIP	Altered Minds-Winnipeg British Columbia Construction Association Immigrant Centre Manitoba Immigrant Employment Council of BC Regina Open Door Society

It is observed that organizations that provide pre-arrival services as Focal Point Partners or Referral Partners of national programs depend fully on referrals to recruit clients. National programs having overseas offices collaborate with IRCC visa offices in recruiting clients. It is the domestically based agency programs and services partners of national programs (such as the partners of the SOPA collaboration) which employ diverse approaches and techniques to recruit clients for their pre-arrival services. Thus, since Focal Point Partners and many agency programs located in the western region rely on Planning for Canada, COA, or CIIP for referrals, these national programs individually and through their joint initiative, Planning for Canada, play a dominant role as the first point of contact and in providing pre-arrival orientations to immigrants destined to the western region of Canada.

5.6 Methods of Services Delivery

A range of methods are used to deliver pre-arrival services by agencies located in the Western Canada. These include: face-to-face, telephone, mail, email, Facebook, Twitter, and different online communication technologies such as skype, webinar, Google Hangouts, TeamViewer, Big Blue Button, and Adobe Connect. However, online technologies, email, and telephone are the most commonly used in delivering pre-arrival services by agencies located in the Western Canada. Among the online devices, Skype is most popularly used. Face-to-face methods are used by only those services that have offices overseas. Email is the most commonly used method among the referral partners. Table 8 displays the methods used by the organizations in delivering services.

Table 8: Methods used by Organizations in Delivering Services

Organization/Program	Method of Services Delivery
Bow Valley College	Email
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Online, Adobe Connect, Webinar
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	Email (mostly), telephone, skype
SmartPathways (Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council)	Email, Skype, Telephone, online
Immigrant Employment Council of BC	Online
India2Canada (Abbotsford Community Services)	Face-to-face (mainly); telephone and online (for out station queries)
AEIP (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.)	Face-to-face (in overseas office and during outreach support); telephone, email and online (for clients located far from offices)
British Columbia Construction Association	Email, skype, telephone, webinar
English Online, Winnipeg	Online
Altered Minds Inc.	Adobe Connect, Big Blue Button, email, Moodle learning management system
Jewish Child and Family Service	Telephone , email, skype
(PAC) Immigrant Centre Manitoba	Telephone, Email, Skype, Google Hangouts, TeamViewer
Red River College	Email
Ready for Manitoba (University of Manitoba	Face-to-face (mostly), email, Skype, Facebook, Twitter (for clients located far from the overseas office)
Newcomer Information Centre	Email (mostly)
Regina Open Door Society	Big Blue Button

Table 9: Providers of Only Pre-Arrival Services and both Pre-Arrival and Post-Arrival Services

Provides Pre-Arrival Services Only	Provides both Pre-arrival and Post-Arrival Services
British Columbia Institute of Technology Red River College University of Manitoba	Abbotsford Community Services Altered Minds Inc. Bow Valley College British Columbia Construction Association Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers English Online Immigrant Centre Manitoba Immigrant Employment Council of BC Jewish Child and Family Services Newcomer Information Centre Red River College Regina Open Door Society (RODS) S.U.C.C.E.S.S. University of Manitoba-RMP YWCA-Winnipeg-Youth Refugee Program

5.7 Entrepreneurship for Pre-Arrival Services

Pre-arrival services in the Western Canada are mostly the initiatives of settlement services organizations of the region who also provide post-arrival services. That is, pre-arrival services are separate wings of their settlement service operations. Among the organizations surveyed, three (3) (Red River College, of University of Manitoba, and British Columbia Institute of Technology) provide pre-arrival immigrant services only. These are primarily post-secondary institutions. Rest fifteen organizations provide both pre-arrival as well as post-arrival services see Table 9).

5.8 Most Highly-Demanded Pre-Arrival Services

Services that immigrants are mostly interested in during their pre-arrival stages can be ordered into three categories: (1) settlement information; (2) employment-related information; and (3) employment related pre-arrival services. Among settlement information include information related to housing, daycare, schooling, banking, and family life. Among employment-related information include information about job opportunity, preparation for employment and career development training. Finally, among the employment-related pre-arrival services that immigrants are mostly interested in include training job search strategies, professional communication, interview strategies, skill upgrading, professional accreditation, mentoring, competency assessment, and assistance in network development.

Table 10: Services that Pre-arrival Immigrants are Most Interested In

Settlement Information	Employment-related Information	Employment-related Pre-Arrival Services
Housing Daycare Schooling Banking Family life	Employment opportunities Preparation for employment Career development training	Job search strategies Professional Communication Interview Strategies Skill upgrading Professional Accreditation Mentoring Competency Assessment Networking

However, it is to note that the above analysis is based on the information derived from pre-arrival service providers. Information from the clients of pre-arrival services was not solicited. Moreover, it was observed that in response to the question "Which services are the clients most interested in?" participants mostly compared their own services in terms of the client's interests. Their responses did not reflect their understanding of services which pre-arrival clients are generally more interested in. Therefore, the above finding may not be generalizable.

5.9 Partnership and Collaboration among the Pre-Arrival Services

Partnership and collaboration seem to be integrated parts of pre-arrival service operations by agencies located in the western Canada. Most organizations providing pre-arrival services partner with other organizations. Three purposes of partnership can be identified: (1) pre-arrival client recruitment; (2) delivery of services; and (3) referral. For example BCCA and IEC-BC partner with CIIP, COA, AEIP, and MHHS (Multicultural Helping House Society) to secure clients for the Newcomers Integration and Facilitating Access to Skilled Trades in British Columbia (FASTBC) programs respectively. Similarly, Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council (CRIEC) partner with Planning for Canada to receive clients for the SmartPathways program. The partners of SOPA collaborate among themselves for the purposes of both recruiting clients and delivering information and training services under the SOPA curriculums. Again, Planning for Canada refers their clients to Focal Point Partners and Referral Partners (after overseas orientation and counselling) so that the partners provide more localized information to their clients.

Three purposes of partnership: *(1) Pre-Arrival Client Recruitment*
                                      (2) Delivery of Services
                                      (3) Referral

Structurally, the practices of partnership among the pre-arrival services take two shapes: (1) unidirectional (top-down) partnership and (2) collaborative or multidirectional partnership. The partnerships between Planning for Canada and AEIP and their Focal Point Partners (FFP) and Referral Partners (RP) represent the first form of partnership while the relationship among the SOPA partners represent the second form of partnership.
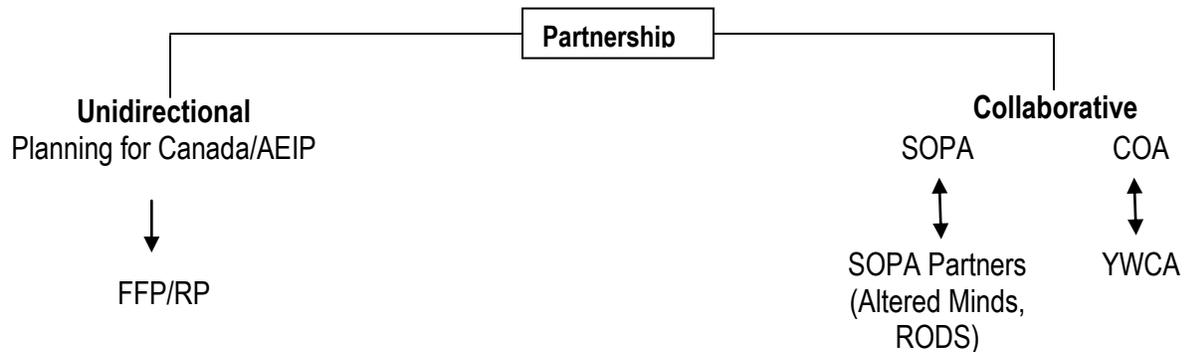
Figure 2: Structure of Partnership among Pre-Arrival Services

5.10 Challenges of Pre-Arrival Services

The study has identified several challenges that pre-arrival services in the Western Canada face. Broadly these challenges can be categorized into six different types. These include challenges with: (1) recruiting clients; (2) service delivery; (3) resources; (4) partnering; (5) programing arrangements; and (6) staffing.

5.10.1 Recruiting Clients

The major challenges indicated by pre-arrival services that they face in recruiting clients include clients' disinterest in and unawareness about pre-arrival services and lack of support from IRCC officials in promoting the services. Participants informed that many potential immigrants do not have knowledge about the effectiveness of pre-arrival services and that there are many who possess negative attitude towards pre-arrival services. Participants also informed that they receive only limited support from the IRCC offices in promoting their services. Some participants also mentioned that it is often difficult to contact officers of the IRCC overseas offices.

> *"We are still facing challenges in terms of reaching out to the target client in an effective way, breaking through the mentality that we don't need pre arrival services."* Participant 1

> *"Confidentiality/Privacy issues … limit a client list from ever being directly given by Canadian Embassy to a pre-departure orientation program."* Participant 2

5.10.2 Service Delivery

Participants mentioned numerous challenges that they face in delivering pre-arrival services. Organizations that deliver services from their overseas offices often find it difficult to communicate with clients or domestic partners due to slow internet connections. Often clients staying at remote locations do not have regular access to internet.

Sometimes the services find it challenging to share realistic information with their pre-arrival clients. It particularly pertains to sharing information about labour market and job opportunities at times when the condition of the Canadian economy is not well. Some participants also mentioned that often they receive requests from clients for services which are beyond their capacity. For example, often clients request them to become guarantor of their lease agreements. Sometimes clients request them to help them find a job with particular employers. Services often find it hard to meet those clients' needs.

Some services mentioned that they often find it difficult to provide appropriate referral services to some clients as they do not have clear understanding of their destinations. This problem particularly pertains to the Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) who often do not know where they will finally settle in Canada.

Overseas pre-arrival services often find it challenging to operate outreach activities in locations which are largely unsafe. Particularly, they find it challenging when they conduct outreach information sessions and workshops in the refugee camps or operate their overseas activities in areas where political conditions are largely unstable or there is a fear of terrorist attack (such as Kenya, Egypt and Lebanon).

"Due to poor telecommunication access (slow Internet connection) in rural areas, the communication with some clients could be a challenge. In some cases, clients have to travel to nearby towns to be connected." – Participant 1

"To provide realistic information about what is for them in Canada, especially nowadays when AB economy is having a hard time. My challenge is to be realistic without discouraging them to come to Canada." Participant 2

"Security and safety of participants and personnel, including health hazard (i.e. Ebola in West Africa; terrorism attacks in Kenya); natural disaster (i.e. Typhoon, power cuts, floods) and political instability (i.e. Egypt, Lebanon) [are challenges in providing pre-arrival services]" Participant 3

5.10.3 Resources

Sometimes funding is inadequate compared to the goals programs wish to achieve through their services. Some clients informed that they often cannot address the assessed needs of the clients with the resources allocated to them. Often actual number of clients the programs serve supersedes their contracted or allocated targets.

"Limited budget lines don't [allow] adequately address program needs" –Participant 1

"Funding is insufficient. The demand for pre-arrival services is extremely high." Participant 2

5.10.4 Partnering

While partnership and collaboration among agencies are vital for operating pre-arrivals services (as discussed above), partnership development and maintenance involve several challenges. Since many pre-arrival services are operated from overseas stations located at different corners and time zones of the world, it is often difficult for the agencies and their offices at various locations to maintain effective and efficient communications among their partners home and abroad.

Some participants also mentioned that insufficient information about other pre-arrival service providers and their services is also a barrier for them in networking and partnership development. According to some participants, the federal government is often not very interested to release information about pre-arrival service agencies. They find this as a problem in developing collaboration and partnership among the pre-arrival service providers.

"Managing two different time zones (managing partners in Canada and meetings and communications are usually done on Canadian time while also providing service delivery 12 hours in advance of Canada – opposing time schedules) [is a challenge]." Participant 1

"Our greatest challenge is getting access to those people who are approved for PR in Canada. There is a reluctance on the part of the federal government to release information about their pre-arrival service agents and that is a bit frustrating as it means we all have to chase other methods of getting to those immigrants." Participant 2

5.10.5 Programing Arrangements

According to some participants, the presence of multiple pre-arrival services in the same overseas locations has an overall negative effect on pre-arrival services. In their views, pre-arrival clients are confused about where to go when there are many pre-arrival services around them, and this makes them suspicious about pre-arrival services and the information the services provide to their clients. Thus, according to these participants, overlap of services reduces interests in pre-arrival services among pre-arrival immigrants.

> *"Established immigrants … are often confused by the number of pre-arrival services out there. They are suspicious about scams and false advertising, and don't believe that we are legitimate sometimes."* Participant 1

> "*Even we, as service providers, wonder why there are so many pre-arrival services, and how we can set our services apart from others – created a unique niche."* Participant 2

5.10.6 Staffing

This type of challenges primarily relates to overseas pre-arrival services that need to hire local staff for overseas offices and deliver services in multiple languages. Often those services find it difficult to hire personnel for their overseas offices, who have adequate knowledge about Canada and can convey accurate information about Canada to their pre-arrival clients. Again, those services which deliver services in multiple languages find it hard to maintain resources up-to-date because they need to translate documents into different languages when there are changes in immigration related policies or other information.

> *"Local hiring of staff in our overseas office who have adequate knowledge of Canada [is a challenge]. We want to make sure that the staff serving our clients have the skills and knowledge to provide the service properly."* – Participant 1

CONCLUSION

Pre-arrival services have drawn a lot of attention and interest in the recent time. However, there are confusions about their meaning, composition and provision in the Canadian context. The primary purposes of the study were to know about pre-arrival services in the Western Canada of Canada, their providers, and the practices and challenges of pre-arrival service deliveries in Western Canada. The study has uncovered some meaningful information about these issues.

We find that six types of pre-arrival services are available in Western Canada, and these services are provided by three different types of programs- national programs, agency programs and Focal Point Partners or Referral Partners of national and agency programs. We also find that programs have different emphases in terms of the services they provide. While some programs primarily focus on providing pre-arrival information and guidance to pre-arrival immigrants, there are other programs, which are relatively few, that focus on both pre-arrival information and pre-arrival preparedness of potential immigrants for integration into the Canadian labour market.

The study has also explored the measures that pre-arrival services use to reach their clients and the ways in which they deliver services to their clients. It identifies four categories of services in terms of the measures they use to reach their clients. While there are services which fully depend on referrals from partners (mainly the Focal Point Partners), there are others which mainly catch clients from the users of their websites. Again, there are services which mainly partner with overseas offices of IRCC to reach their clients. There are other services (mainly the agency programs) which employ a large variety of measures to recruit clients. Pre-arrival services of the Western Canada also use a large variety of approaches to deliver services, which range from using mailing services and face-to-face sessions to the use of most advanced internet technologies.

Moreover, the study has examined the entrepreneurial practices around pre-arrival services and the demand side of these services. It finds that pre-arrival services are mostly separate wings of settlement service organizations that also provide post-arrival immigrant services. In regards to the demands for pre-arrival services, the study finds that pre-arrival immigrants are most interested in three types of services: settlement information, employment-related information, and employment-related pre-arrival services.

The study also finds that partnership and collaboration are integral parts of pre-arrival services in Western Canada. Pre-arrival providers partner among themselves primarily for three purposes: pre-arrival client recruitment, delivery of services, and referral. They generally form two types of partnership: unidirectional top-down partnership and multidirectional collaborations.

Finally, in regards to the challenges around pre-arrival services in the Western Canada, the study identifies six types of challenges. These include challenges with recruiting clients, challenges with service delivery, challenges with resources, challenges with partnering, challenges in programing arrangements, and organizational challenges. It is hoped that the information that the study has uncovered will be useful for those who are interested in pre-arrival services in Canada and help develop clearer understanding of pre-arrival services in the Canadian context.

Western Region Working Group (WRWG)
Strengthening immigrant settlement and integration in Western Canada

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