

To Best Support
LGBTQ Immigrant Newcomers

Community Dialogue: Participatory Recommendations Report

January 26th, 2015



LGBTQ Immigrant Newcomers, Service Providers, and Community Organizers, gather for a knowledge exchange.

On January 26th, 2015, MOSAIC's I Belong project hosted an event where 80 people worked towards improving the quality of life of LGBTQ newcomers through connecting, listening, and exchanging knowledge. Through experiential learning activities, arts facilitation, table discussions, and a forum with special guest speakers, participants began to scratch the surface of a large complex issue. This document organizes and shares the data collected at the forum with the intention of continuing the conversation and strengthening the relationships across experiences and communities.

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I Belong aims to support LGBTQ immigrant newcomers by seeking to address the intersectionality between sexuality, gender, race, cultural diversity, class, criminalization and colonialism. This six month pilot project, launched in Burnaby and New Westminster, was funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. To find out more about the continuity of I Belong please visit mosaicbc.com.



Financé par :

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

“We need more time together!!!”



What made this gathering meaningful was the willingness of the guests to share their knowledge and experiences. People had an opportunity to connect with one another, think critically about their role, and begin to envision creative solutions.

At Trout Lake Community Centre, Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories, **Wes Nahanee**, from Squamish Nation, started off the afternoon with words and prayers. **Nicki Kahn moui** and **Melanie Schambach** as MCs, guided participants through experiential learning activities, data collection, self-reflections, and creative mapping exercises. **Emma Kim**, **Mirela Prljaskaj**, **Alex Whinter**, **Johnson Showeye**, **Zdravko Cimbalevic**, **Mira Ghattas**, and **Tahseen Ahmed** facilitated table discussions. And guest speakers, **Chuck Lafferty**, **Emma Kim**, **Sharalyn Jordan**, **Joshnit Kumar**, and **Benita Bunjun** opened discussions with their personal experiences and analysis. It is important to highlight that 80% of the 15 facilitators, guest speakers, and MCs self-identify as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning) immigrants. Others self-identified as white LGBTQ, and Two-Spirit.

This event was only possible with the collaboration of various groups and organizations that have been working head-on over the years to create welcoming communities and policies for LGBTQ newcomers. We especially want to thank members of **Rainbow Refugee** for participating and supporting MOSAIC in this learning process.

MOSAIC's role is to support cross-collaborations between grassroots groups that have been tackling these issues. **I Belong** was created as a 6-month pilot project funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

What truly made this event special was the passion and commitment of the guests. Some of the organizations represented were **MOSAIC**, **Rainbow Refugee**, **SALAM**, **ISSofBC**, **Battered Women Support Services**, **Family Services of Greater Vancouver**, **Burnaby Neighborhood House**, **QMUNITY**, **LISTN**, **Kiawassa Neighborhood House**, **SUCCESS**, **Parent Support Services of BC**, **Mount Pleasant Neighborhood House**, **CIC**, **Queer Migration Collective**, **Legal Service Society**, **Options for Sexual Health**, **Out on Screens**, **Broadway Youth Resource Centre**, **Liu Institute for Global Issues (UBC)**, **PRISM**, **Vancouver School Board**, **Pinoy Pride**, **City of Burnaby**, **The Frank Theater Company**, **Act II Society Child & Family Services**, and **MLA Vancouver Kensington**.



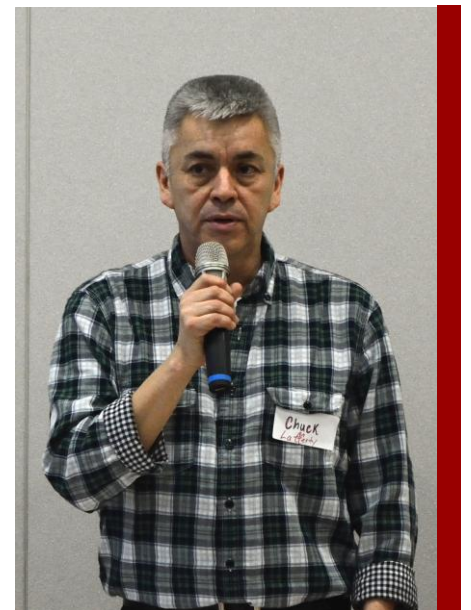
Panel

Chuck Lafferty is Dene- Liidlí Kue First Nation Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories and now resides in Vancouver, BC. He identifies as Two-Spirit or gay/queer. Since 1996 he has been employed with the Urban Native Youth Association, and has advocated having Two-Spirit inclusion within the UNYA agency. He partnered with UNYA in 2001 to produce, coordinate, and host the 13th International Two-Spirit Gathering.

Chuck offered some history on the impacts of Residential Schools, the internalized racism and homophobia, as well as how Two Spirits-Gay, Lesbian, Trans and Bi aboriginal people identify under this umbrella.

Presentation Highlights:

- Our society today lives the impacts of Indian residential school legacy. Indian residential schools, funded by the Canadian government and administered by Christian Churches, had a policy to remove children from their families and culture and assimilate them into the dominant Canadian culture. The physical, emotional, and sexual abuse plus the deprivation of their ancestral languages, and culture, all contributes to the ongoing intergenerational trauma of the indigenous peoples in Canada.
- The term 'two-spirit' is a modern umbrella term used by some indigenous people for gender variant individuals. Many First Nation individuals do not identify as two-spirit. One should never assume and put a whole group under



**“Let each person
identify themselves.
Never assume.”**

this term. There are many nations (over 200 in BC) and each has its own language, beliefs, and different understandings of and terminologies for gender identities.

Emma Kim is positive and very creative. She was born in South Korea and came to Canada in 2014. She has been doing extended volunteer work and contributes to the LGBTQ immigrant community. She hopes to work towards supporting young LGBT teenagers. Emma spoke about her experiences as an LGBTQ immigrant including her challenges with job search, housing, and a sense of belonging.

Presentation Highlights:

- It is very difficult to get a job in Canada without Canadian experience or Canadian education. With a Bachelor's Degree and good grades, an immigrant may find themselves looking for entry level service jobs. For a transgender person, the problems add up when the sex outlined in a work permit doesn't match with the gender expression of the individual.

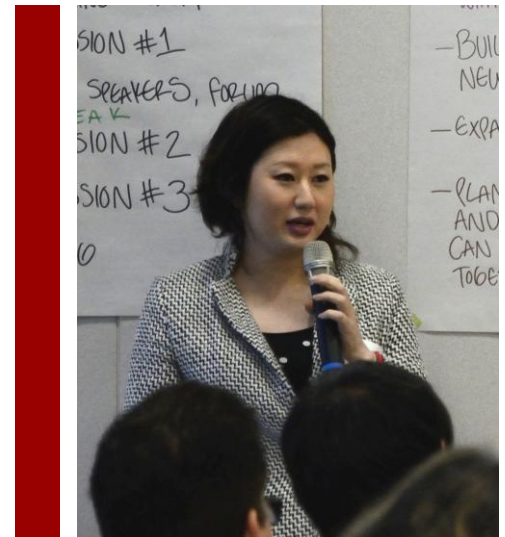
"I wasn't ready to go through very high risk surgery yet. It's my body and my life. I want to have the surgery when I am ready. As much I want to have the surgery, I am scared and afraid."

- Housing is a big issue for trans people. It is common to experience hatred and judgement when looking for apartments or housemates. Once finding a place, people are also exposed to further surveillance and harassment. Affordable housing is usually found far away from LGBTQ communities; therefore, they are more exposed to discrimination. This has a direct impact on employment as well. For instance, when a community is not welcoming to visible trans women of color, finding employment that is safe and inclusive becomes a problem.

Sharalyn Jordan has advocated alongside Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Trans survival migrants as a community organizer with Rainbow Refugee since 2004. In 2011 she joined Simon Fraser University's Counselling Psychology Program as an Assistant Professor where she teaches, researches, and supervises clinical practice.

Presentation Highlights:

- Advantages such as whiteness, education, financial cushion, cisgender positions, and alignment of documents with body, are privileges that narrow perspectives and understandings.



"I want to have the surgery when I'm ready."

"For those who walk the life of gender normative privilege or the privilege of whiteness, it is very easy to conflate equality and laws with safety."

"Some lessons to work from a place of privilege are: Learning to listen, rather than speak from a place of privilege; to think intersectionally and systemically; Working for change that works for ALL, particularly for those who are marginalized."

- Refugees are survivors of colonialism.

"At least 78 countries continue to criminalize same-sex behaviour or gender variance. Most of these are the legacy of colonialism and British Penal Code. Homophobic and transphobic violence most often occurs in our most intimate and everyday relationships. Families, neighbourhoods, and schools become sites of surveillance and danger. Sexualized violence is used as a way to shame and silence... to stigmatize as evil or deviant, as tremendously ill and to further isolate people."

- Refugees are survivors of migration systems that exclude people based on priorities of global capitalism, neo-colonialism, and post 9/11 notions of security. A radical change in Canada's refugee system, implemented in 2013, has intensified restrictions and criminalization.

"Refugees have as little as one month to make their case, and many are denied the right to appeal. Locally we are seeing more of our members being kept in detention for longer and facing security checks. We are seeing transit police on the Skytrain turning people to immigration."

- The responsibilities for people working as allies include building relationships, and recreate processes and policies that build safety.

"How can we create relationship and

policies that can foster that sense of safety? How can we take intake procedures, organizational processes that are broadly as inclusive as possible and recognize that people are not ready or willing to say all that is relevant to their situation the first time they meet you?"

- It is important to unpack the discourse of Canada as a 'safe haven.'

Joshnit Kumar born and raised in the Fiji Islands now considers himself to be a member of the community here. He has been living in Canada for 10 years. He works for First Nations Health Authority, as a Travel Assessor and takes pride in being part of public sector service delivery. Josh has been actively committed to supporting LGBTQ newcomers.

Presentation Highlights:

- When immigrants arrive to Canada and try to settle, systems are constantly attacking. There's a need to find solutions for this to stop.

"The System should not be designed to cause vulnerable souls to get caught up living in a vicious cycle by being in the system; they not only have protection and guidance but much more than that. I believe the directives for the system should be in alignment with EMPOWERMENT which makes people more self-sufficient."



- Everyone is connected to each other and Mother Nature.

"We must always remember to stand on our grounds of humanity for we all breathe the same air, share the same sky, the rays of sun are spread to all equally. Mother Nature does not discriminate, and neither should anything else. We all come from the same soil, and breathe. We are all connected, so much connected."

- Through a spiritual journey, the self-realization of our own assumptions and judgements and the contemplation of connection between all things have contributed to a path of healing and acceptance.

"My personal epiphany is that I am constantly learning to not identify one by what is in between their legs, and that comes with a lot of spiritually incorporated ideologies."

"I have learned that self-realization is the power within the soul and absolute power demands absolutely nothing. At this time I would like to express that my mind is not complaining, it is being responsible, I feel courageous, confident and I also feel hollow and empty."

"My spirituality gives me strength, that inner strength to manage difficult situations and keep smiling as ever."

Benita Bunjun became most informed about the intersections of gender, race, sexuality, citizenship, language, Indigeneity, and im/migration as a queer woman of colour from her time being mentored and organizing in the racialized queer women's movement at Vancouver Status of Women and the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre. She is currently a Post Doctoral Fellow with the Centre for the Study of Gender, Social Inequities, and Mental Health at Simon Fraser University. She received her PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies at



the University of British Columbia on racialization, nation-building, power, and entitlement. Benita is also the past multi-year Project Coordinator at Vancouver Status of Women on the Racialization of Poverty. She currently teaches in the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice at UBC. She is most committed to her responsibilities and responsiveness regarding the complexity of Indigenous-settler (of colour) relations and encounters.

Presentation Highlights:

- Multiculturalism and the white settler concept have locked us in denying the recognition of settling on indigenous territories.

"A white settler society is one established by dominant Europeans on non-European soil. Its origins lie in the dispossession and near extermination of Indigenous populations by the conquering European. And then as immigrants, we came and settled on top of that. We need to keep in the frame that we are in a white settler society. The moment that this leaves the frame, we are doing a colonial helping narrative."

"To deny that history is to deny so much of the people who have been here over time in terms of indigenous people. How much

do we think about 'the settling' on top of 'the settling' on Indigenous territories? "

"Is it possible to begin to envision an intersectional framework with Indigenous Nations regarding immigrant and refugee's freedom?"

- Organizations also keep indigenous people from self-determination.

"Organizations are not neutral innocent sites. They are mapped onto the national mythology of empty inhabited lands producing dispossession of and silencing the pre-contact histories of indigenous people. They are political sites within the larger nation. When I lobby the government for women's inequality, it's the government that give me those rights. And those rights are dependent on keeping the indigenous people dispossessed."

- As service providers and organizations we need to rethink the narrative of seeing the work as 'helping,' and of seeing Canada as the safe haven.

"Canada and Canadians are associated with goodness and doing what is right. Third world places, as backwards regarding sexuality and LGBTQI."

"Putting Canada and Canadians as saviour, super-human, super-humanitarian, super-caring are put differently above all others."

"How do we interrupt the trap of falling into the 'west is the best' or 'the west is more advanced regarding equality, democracy, and liberty?"

"It is important to recognize that Trout Lake Community Centre and all these buildings that we walk into are illegal settlements. It is important to understand that just as we had seen as dangers and inequalities in other parts of the world, we also see Canada as another place of illegality and inequality."

- While there is a mythology of liberty, we need to widen our frame and understand where the narratives of 'who belongs' and 'who doesn't belong' come from.

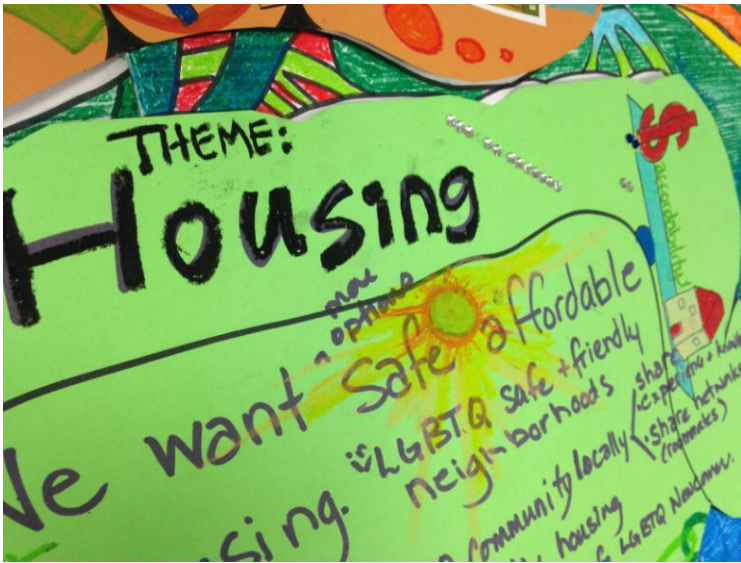
"Terra Nullius means empty uninhabited lands. Just as Australia and New Zealand conquerors say 'Well, this land is empty, so I can settle here and call it mine', the land as shared and as developed by

enterprising settlers. I argue this is a racial story. It solidifies Europeans as entitled to the land- a claim built in law. People of color are seen as late arrivals coming to the shores of North America long after much of the development has occurred, even though you know how much

migrant laborers provide to us and the criminalization that goes into that."

"There is mythology of liberty, and who belongs and who doesn't. Every time someone says: "Where are you from?" or "You speak good English." These are not neutral words. They are words of belonging. They are words of not belonging. They are the words of the founding people of the land in which we see in law as French and English."

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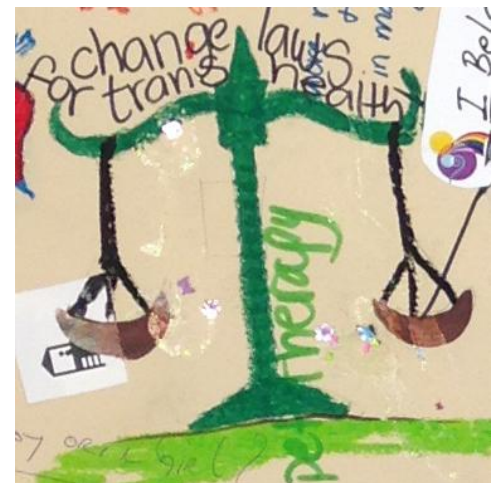


Gaps and Strengths

Gaps

Community Dialogue panelists and participants were asked to list some of the gaps and barriers that LGBTQ newcomers face within the Lower Mainland. Results found that gaps are prominent in LGBTQ organizations, settlement services, government and organizational policies and laws. The three major reoccurring themes in this exercise included:

1. **Lack of Adequate Resources and Services**- there continues to be an absence in services catered towards the LGBTQ immigrant community, including a lack of safe spaces and representation within organizations.
2. **Lack of Training, Education, and Awareness**- there is a colossal gap in the awareness, both for organizational staff and the greater community, towards LGBTQ issues, settlement challenges and the overall impacts towards people coming from various intersections.
3. **Gaps within the Government, Funding, and Policies**- there are several policies and laws that create various barriers for the LGBTQ immigrant community.



“Within organizations, we need representation of LGBTQ immigrants.”

Furthermore, barriers in housing, employment, and transportation, along with the absence of safe space, mental health acknowledgement, and language inclusion were repeatedly categorized as prominent gaps. Below is a detailed compilation of the various gaps that have and continue to create barriers for LGBTQ immigrants.

- "Accessibility and Representation".
- "More public dialogue with first nations people and newcomers".
- "Legal Aid and Advocacy that actually works. Free services that are helpful, continuous, and accountable".
- "Support training for all Settlement Workers to better support LGBTQ newcomers".
- "More representation within organizations".
- "Someone to listen to LGBTQ newcomer stories".
- "Spaces to organize and articulate experiences that are only for and by racialized queer newcomers".

Lack of Adequate Resources and Services



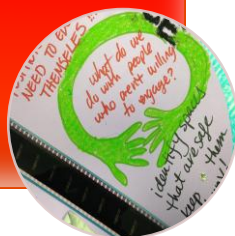
- "To constantly remind myself of my privileges as a Westernized woman, and my lens when I interact with LGBTQ newcomers".
- "Settler colonialism not being recognized in settler organizations".
- "Forced surgery to have documents that match self-identified/presenting gender".
- "Recognition and acknowledgment of transition status of trans newcomers and acknowledgment and respect for those who do not want surgery".
- "Educating newcomers, who are not directly impacted".
- "Training and awareness on LGBTQ issues and settlement challenges".

Lack of Training, Education, and Awareness



- "Financial help and recognition of specific medical needs of transgender folks".
- "Oppressive practices, policies, and legislations that further discriminate LGBTQ folks".
- "Why PR Card required for services? This creates barrier".
- "Status of newcomer client to be eligible for funding (PR, Citizen and refugee)".
- "Difficulties with making asylum claims in Canada/ unrealistic timelines".
- "Too little funding/money support for groups to do sustainable work".

Gaps within the Government, Funding and Policies



- "No Trans specific refugee housing spaces".
- "Difficulty in finding safe and affordable housing. Assistance does not provide enough money to live".
- "Racism and discrimination for employment and housing based on accent, skin colour, and sexual orientation/gender identity".

Barriers in Employment and Housing



- "Western thoughts and language do not reflect world point of view of LGBTQ newcomers".
- "Barriers are created for immigrants when we use academic intellectual terms, i.e. gender non conforming".

Barriers in Language



- "Scrutiny at public spaces-transit cops report on 'illegal' immigrants".

Barriers in Transit and Border Security



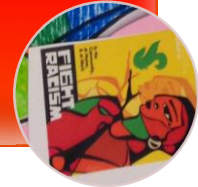
- "Not enough mental health supports for LGBTQ newcomers".

Gaps in Mental Health



- "Loneliness; lack of community to belong to".

Lack of Community



- "Settlement [sites] usually do not feel and look welcoming for LGBTQ newcomers".
- "Despite 'equality' there is still continued discrimination".

Lack of Safe Spaces



Strengths

Community Dialogue panelists and participants were asked to describe the positive experiences of LGBTQ newcomers and the advantages of being in the Lower Mainland. Results found that strengths were highlighted in LGBTQ organizations, settlement services, government and organization policies and laws. Three of the major reoccurring themes included:

1. **A Strong Support and Connection within the Community-** there has been an increase in the inclusion and openness within and towards the LGBTQ immigrant community, making settlement in the Lower Mainland easier.
2. **Increase in Training, Education, and Awareness-** despite needing a lot more work, there has been an increase in awareness and training for support workers and the greater community.
3. **Strength in Policy, Laws, and Government compared to other countries-** the laws and policies in the Lower Mainland for many LGBTQ immigrants are a lot more inclusive than those in their home countries. These laws are seen as strengths, but have plenty of room for improvement.

Furthermore, participants acknowledged health and well-being, diversity, individuality, and various services as contributors to their positive experiences. Below is a detailed compilation of the various positive experiences and strengths found in this exercise.



“We have committed individuals; our people are our strengths.”



- "Training and awareness on the challenge and issues faced by LGBTQ newcomers for frontline workers and organizations".
- "Increasing awareness= greater acceptance and tolerant society".

Increase in Education, Training, and Awareness



- "Organizations like Legit, UNYA, and Rainbow Refugee that are committed to providing safe spaces for LGBTQ immigrants and newcomers".
- "Mainstream organizations have made efforts to have a 'positive' space".

Services



- "Diverse stories, knowledge, leadership and understanding".
- "Multiplicity of different genders coming together".
- "Different journeys and languages and understandings of the world".

Diversity



- "Community based and community directed health through advocacy".
- "Health and happiness is well-being for all".

Health and Well-Being



- "Immigration Canada is funding this project! It's a great first step and needs to continue".
- "Some legal protection and goodwill for LGBTQ2+ folks".
- "Government laws and recognition, i.e. extending (somewhat) benefits to same sex".

Strength in Policy, Laws, and Government



- "Freedom of expression"

Individual Strengths





Participatory Recommendations

Recommendations

For decision makers impacting the systems we live in:

R 01: Begin to envision an intersectional framework with Indigenous Nations regarding immigrant and refugee`s freedom. Re-evaluate how organizations reinforce colonial settlement, and work towards decolonizing practices, and services.

- "Keep settler-colonialism front and center in our actions and practices."
- "Framework that recognizes colonial history and space to learn from indigenous histories".

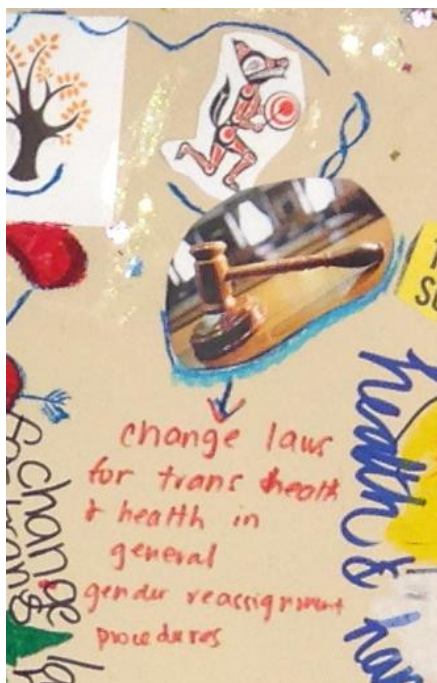
R 02: Provide access to services for everyone including refugees and non-status immigrants. Work towards re-shaping policies that require a type of identification or status in order to provide services. As many LGBTQ immigrants land in Canada seeking refuge without identification or status, there is a need for services to be accessible.

- "Access without fear."
- "Advocacy is very important to do at many different levels i.e. individual, services, systematic/legislative".



" We need a framework that recognizes colonial history and a space to learn from indigenous people."

R 03: Drop requirements of documents to identify one's gender, and let each person self-identify their gender. Trans newcomers to Canada experience barriers in obtaining government documents which reflect their gender identity. For instance, CIC (Citizenship & Immigration Canada) policies state that its documents cannot be changed to reflect persons' lived gender identity. This not only creates a lack of safety on a daily basis, but also negatively impacts Trans people when looking for housing and employment.



- "Drop requirement of gender reassignment surgery for Trans newcomers. Let folks self-identify their gender."
- "More gender inclusive legislation (e.g. 'spouse')".

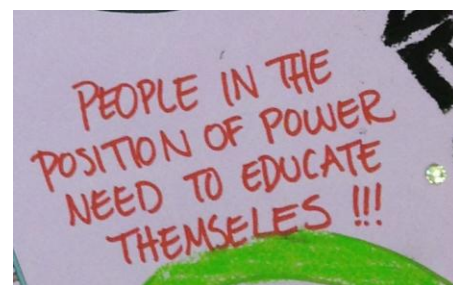


R 04: Allocate more funding to address the mental health of LGBTQ newcomers. LGBTQ refugees are affected by psychological trauma stemming from being persecuted for their sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity in their country of origin. Many flee their home countries alone and are at risk for depression, anxiety, suicide, and substance abuse when taking refuge in Canada. There is an urgent need for resources, services, access, exposure, and community/family collaboration to address trauma and work towards the mental, physical, and spiritual health of LGBTQ newcomers.

- "Counselling services to deal with trauma/past experience".
- "Emphasizing support for family members (of LGBTQ) as well in order to include them in the dialogue".
- "Mental health support for LGBT newcomers."
- "Exposure and access to wellness and self-care resources for mental and physical and spiritual health."

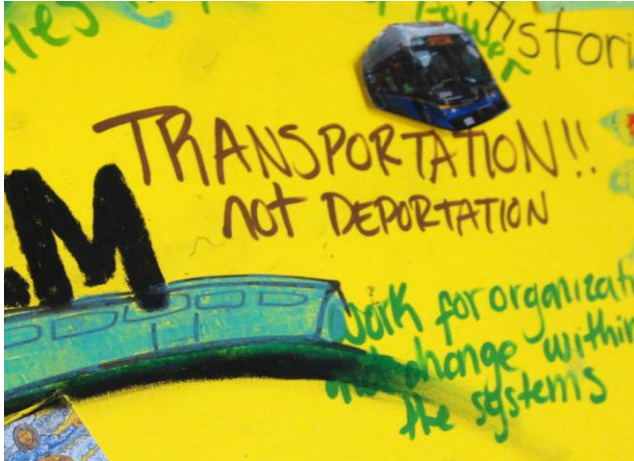
R 05: Allocate funding to create intersectional spaces for more action-oriented dialogues. There is a call to bring together racialized LGBTQ communities, immigrant LGBTQ communities, indigenous communities, and service providers to strategize on how to support everyone's sense of wellbeing.

- "Continue to build partnerships and connections between immigrant and social services and LGBTQ community and organizations."
- "Greater awareness regardless of whether a person is LGBTQ or not, having ANYONE TALK raises awareness- neutralizes without agendas".



R 06: Support businesses and organizations to become trained and aware of how to benefit from LGBTQ newcomer talent. To best benefit from the credentials and assets of diverse LGBTQ newcomers in order to further their employment opportunities. There is a need to support trained champions to deliver on cross-cultural sensitivity and LGBTQ inclusivity.

- “Systems to recognize the credentials and assets and knowledge of diverse LGBTQS newcomer’s experiences.”



R 07: Work towards changing immigration policies that impact refugees and racialized immigrants. As outlined in the panel, refugees are survivors of migration systems that exclude people based on the priorities of global capitalism, neocolonialism and post 9/11 notions of security. Restrictions and criminalization intensified after the radical changes in Canada’s refugee system.

- “Despite the ‘surface’ freedom Canada seems to have, it can be seeped in bureaucracy and subtle discrimination/marginalization=less bureaucratic expectations.”
- “Advocacy at local, provincial and federal level to change immigration policies that impact refugees and racialized immigrants.”
- “Canada should be providing as many supports as possible, NOT BARRIERS! So people can succeed and become healthy and happy Canadians.”



For settlement organization, LGBTQ organizations, and service providers:

R 08: Service providers and organizations need to collaborate with indigenous people regarding immigrant’s and refugee’s freedom. Service providers need to widen the frame and understanding of what happens when settler organizations don’t recognize settler colonialism. As outlined in the panel, “multiculturalism and the white settler concept has locked us in denying the recognition of settling on indigenous territories.”

- “Settler colonialism not being recognized in settler organizations.”
- “We need to keep in the frame that we are in a white settler society. The moment that this leaves the frame, we are doing a colonial helping narrative.”
- “We need to recognize that when we lobby the government for one’s inequality, it’s the government that give those rights. And those rights are dependent on keeping the indigenous people dispossessed.”



R 09: Strategize for safe housing and employment for LGBTQ immigrants particularly for trans people. Supporting trans immigrants with housing is highlighted as a priority. Organizations need to collaborate and create a list of safe spaces for housing and employment that are free of homophobia and transphobia.



- "FINDING EMPLOYMENT AS A TRANSGENDER IS VERY DIFFICULT."
- "HOUSING NEEDS TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE."
- "BETTER HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT."
- "ACCEPTING OF LGBTQ REFUGEES IS ONE THING BUT PROVIDING JOBS/HOUSING THAT ARE LGBT FRIENDLY IS ANOTHER THING."

R 10: Have more visible representation of racialized LGBTQ newcomers in organizations, while creating these job opportunities with proper support, training and capacity building. Hiring an LGBTQ newcomer with proper training, not only opens job opportunity for this community but also benefits the organization with the unique knowledge and experience the individual would contribute. This is not only a step further in equity, but also a

step further in building safety for other LGBTQ newcomer clients.

- "More representation within organizations."

R 11: Make services, resources, and opportunities more accessible and friendly by using imagery, language, and communication channels that speak to LGBTQ immigrants.

Languages other than English to promote programs and services are encouraged. By adding posters in the hallways and offices, organizations can celebrate the visibility of LGBTQ cultural communities. Using multicultural channels in languages other than English is crucial to reaching out to LGBTQ newcomers.

- "Creating more inclusivity and accessibility and community".
- "Thinking of a space not only as a place to congregate but an experience to create more safety and change and support".
- "Making services/resources more welcoming and visible, especially to the people that need it most (who are the least vocal and the most isolated)."
- "Visibility of resources available for LGBTQ newcomers."
- "Awareness of resources/services through multicultural channels/ languages NOT in English".

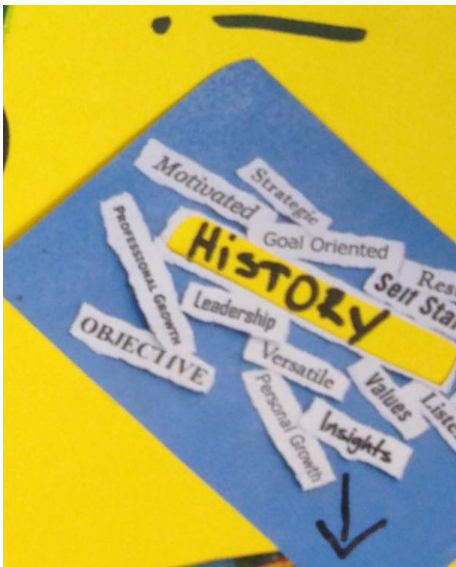


R 12: Support administration, front-line workers, and managers with intersectional anti-oppression training. While cross-cultural training and LGBTQ training is very important for all workers in the service sector, it is also important to receive training through an anti-oppression lens while looking at all the different forms of discrimination newcomers are faced with, including discrimination based on mental/physical health, criminalization, class, immigration status and colonization.

- "Further training/educational opportunities for non LGBTQ settlement workers".
- "Awareness of LGBTQ newcomer's challenges in belonging and the intersections of the perspective".
- "I recommend to have more orientation and training for front line workers".
- "Training for settlement workers on the barriers by LGBTQ youth and adults they work with".
- "Mentorship programs tailored to LGBTQ needs."
- "Better training on how to be an ally."

For community members, organizers, and one-on-one relationships:

R 13: Rethink the narrative of seeing Canada as the “savior country” and as a “safe haven”. As explained by the panelists, Canada and Canadians are associated with ‘goodness’ and ‘modernity’; while the third world countries are seen as backward regarding sexuality and LGBTQ issues. Benita Bunjun explains how it is important to understand that just as we have seen as dangers and inequalities in other parts of the world, we must also see Canada as another place of illegality and inequality in terms of its history of treatment of indigenous people and of migrants from different cultures. “How do we interrupt the trap of falling into ‘the west is the best’ and ‘the west is more advanced?’”



“Avoid putting Canada and Canadians (differently) above all others; avoid putting them as saviour, super-human, super-humanitarian, super-caring are put differently above all others.”
“Creating a non-hierarchical space”.

R 14: Raise awareness that widens our frame to understand where the narratives of ‘who belongs’ and ‘who doesn’t belong’ comes from. Be aware of your own assumptions, privileges and power. When we hear “Where are you from?” or “You speak very good English” we are hearing words of belonging and not belonging. There is a need to educate our communities to understand the roots of where these

separations come from, and how to re-shape our language, interactions and awareness. There is a need for education and awareness on the advantages/disadvantages we carry through language, education, skin color, race, culture, class, matching identity documents, status, mental health, criminalization, and impacts of colonization.

- “Not forcing people to identify themselves based on the Western and European worldview.”
- “To constantly remind myself of my privileges as a Westernized woman, and my lens when I interact with LGBTQ newcomers”
- “Raise awareness campaigns and work by and for refugee newcomers.”
- “Widening our frames.”
- “Within schools, actually teach empathy and compassion through real actions not just on paper or beautifully packed word.”
- “Recognition of diverse stories of migration and diverse identities reflected in the representation at organization and power”.



- “Recognition of my history, my people, my knowledge, my language vs. dominant society”.

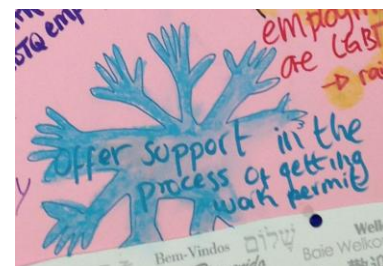
R 15: Create spaces where different minority groups can cross, connect, and strengthen their relationships. Create spaces where racialized LGBTQ communities, LGBTQ immigrant communities and LGBTQ2S indigenous communities can come together and build partnerships from their common goals.

- “More conversation and spaces for only LGBTQ immigrants/refugees and newcomers to organize and articulate their experiences.”
- “Bridging our youth and elders and our cultures”.
- “Emphasizing support for family members (of LGBTQ) as well in order to include them in the dialogue”.

- “More cross-cultural events and connections between LGBTQ newcomers and 2S (Two-Spirit) indigenous communities.”

R 16: Advocate for better legal protection for refugees and newcomers. Become informed of the relevant resources available; keep up-to-date with rights and legal changes; give the right referrals.

- “Find ways of documenting when LGBTQ refugees and immigrants are being exploited.”
- “Advocate for better legal protections for refugees/newcomers, including: making a claim, accessing supports, etc.”

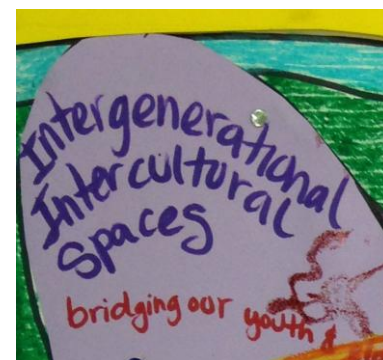


R 17: Allow privacy when disclosing of migration/‘coming-out’ story. Not expecting people with first-hand-experiences to educate others about everything on LGBTQ newcomers issues. Independent research is encouraged and mandatory in order to better serve and understand the unique needs of LGBTQ newcomers. Understanding and valuing the courage and strength it takes for each to share migration story or ‘coming-out’ story.

- “Be respectful of newcomers and allow privacy when disclosure of their circumstances.”

R 18: Be mindful of the power unbalances of language and spaces one takes and allows in a one-on-one or group setting. Be more inclusive to others by learning when to step in to speak, when to step back to listen, and how to choose words that are more relevant, uplifting, and understanding. Noticing how much space we take when we speak and shifting our attention to active listening while being curious of other’s experiences, opinions and stories. When talking about LGBTQ issues, be aware that most of these concepts are based on western understanding of gender and sexuality. Also, note that other cultures may not use feminine/masculine pronouns altogether, so in some cases it is not the best idea to ask everyone in the room to share their preferred pronoun.

- “Active listening and more space to speak for people whose English is not 1st tongue”.
- “Avoid academic intellectual terms with newcomer immigrants; its disempowering when someone speaks with terms you don’t understand about your own lived history.”
- “Western thought and language does not reflect world point of view of LGBTQ newcomer.”





The dialogue identified eight pressing themes: Systems, Housing, Awareness, Health, Community, Creating Positive Space, Services, and Employment. Participants joined a focus group on a theme they found most relevant in their life/work.

"Where do you want to go? How are you going to get there?" Participants were asked to reflect on these two questions. Everyone was encouraged to connect to the creative side of the brain and express recommended goals and needed action steps.

A crafty map compared the landscape of a human body with the landscape of society. Each organ represented different sectors in society. Like each organ is dependent and intertwined with other organs in the human body, each sector in our society also needs to work in collaboration with other sectors. For a human body to thrive organs need to communicate, share, and collaborate; for a society to thrive, sectors need to cross over, communicate, share and collaborate.

Each organ/sector identified a pressing theme. Participants expressed recommended goals through metaphor, symbols, doodling and quotes.



"YES to diverse stories, knowledge, leadership and understanding."



Theme: Health

Theme: Community



Theme: Awareness

Theme: Systems



[illegible]

Themes

Housing

We want safe affordable housing. LGBTQ safe & friendly neighbourhoods.

- Support from LGBTQ community locally, nationally & listing of LGBTQ friendly housing
- Agencies that support housing for LGBTQ Homeless
- Program of assistance
- Gather and publish stories of what is really happening in Q! Townships

Share & support your community
Share networks (resources)

Q! Townships
LGBTQ Community
Housing



THEME: EMPLOYMENT

JOBS

build capacity
People playing a role

Government bureaucracy
Government is not the answer

Senior leaders
Senior leaders
those who work with them

Identify Employment
Find the higher flexibility in business

Support
at the point of work being

Daily interaction
Employment and the daily interaction

WELCOME