

SWIS Keys to Success

At the January 18, 2008 SWISAC meeting, the SWISAC committee endorsed the following guiding principles that are critical to the success of any Settlement Workers in Schools project:

- The partnership between settlement agencies, school boards and CIC that ‘governs’ the program is a key strength of SWIS. The interaction at local schools and on steering committees has raised the profile of newcomer issues and led to better understanding of each partner’s strategies and challenges for improving outcomes for newcomers. In addition to more effective service delivery, the partnership has generated ‘added value’:
 - School board representatives have collaborated in the development of SWIS videos, posters, guides and tip sheets.
 - Settlement workers have participated in school based and board-wide professional development sessions.
 - Newcomer Orientation Week, a major new initiative that involved all the partners was developed in 2007.
- The operational structures work well and there are sufficient funding and expertise in the program to act upon decisions made by the partners. For example:
 - The increased number of Dari speaking newcomers led to requests for materials in that language. As a result, all materials are routinely translated into that language.
 - The expansion of the program highlighted the need for a common training plan for newly hired settlement workers. This has led to a two-day, centralized training program for all new workers that is held four times a year.
- The community based service delivery model is very effective. School based settlement services are very accessible to newcomer clients and school staff. It has connected newcomer families to settlement and other community services early in the settlement process. Also, settlement workers now have greatly increased expertise in education-related settlement issues.
- The program has linked professional and devoted staff within each of the partners. This has led to shared ownership of the program and common learnings about the needs of newcomers and how to meet them. *Passion of the stakeholders Program stakeholders recognize the connection between their efforts and a real impact on newcomers.*
- Institutional change – promotes better understanding of the needs of newcomers. *The ongoing presence of the SW in local schools and the cumulative impact of all*

the SWs has to some extent obliged school boards and CIC to reflect upon and address systemic issues that adversely affect newcomers.

- Partnership – interaction and sharing sectors that wouldn't otherwise relate. *Prior to SWIS, relationships between the partners were undeveloped and there wasn't sufficient rapport to discuss difficult issues and understand each others' perspectives and constraints.*
- Facilitation of sharing between programs. *The regular steering, coordinator and provincial advisory committee meetings create a culture of sharing between programs that contributes to ongoing growth and dialogue.*
- Cultural brokering between school staff and newcomer clients.
- Program is well resourced – tools, training, people resources
- Sharing infrastructure – advisory bodies, steering committees, coordinator meetings