

**On the Edge of the Mosaic:  
Immigration Planning in  
Atlantic Canada**

**Karin Kronstal, Dalhousie University  
November 19, 2009  
Atlantic Planners Institute Annual**

# Outline

- + Trends in immigration to Atlantic Canada
- + Overview of current research
- + The role of local government in immigration
- + Five things to consider when preparing to plan
- + Resources, sources and one tip



# Regional Trends in Immigration

Immigrants to Atlantic Canada are:

- + 3.4% of total population (vs. 20% of Canadian population)
- + More likely (70%) to live in urban centres than non-immigrants (55%), especially those arriving within the past five years (80%)
- + More likely to work in the agricultural sector or own a small business if they arrived from the UK or US



# Regional Trends in Immigration (cont.)

Immigrants to Atlantic Canada are:

- + Most likely arrived under the family class, but this is changing under the provincial nominee agreements
- + Arriving in increasing numbers from China, India & Korea (nominees, professionals, international students)



# Socioeconomic Profiles from Newcomer Hot Spots

Arrivals during 2001-2006 period (Akbari, 2009):

- + Halifax, NS: Primarily economic & family class, young (25-44), highly educated (more than half arrive with a degree), earn on average more than non-immigrants
- + Charlottetown, PEI: Majority come from China (decreasing trend), young (25-44), mostly economic class and refugees, higher than average income, low unemployment rates
- + St. John's, NFLD: increasing economic class (from China), significant refugee intake (35%), doubling of intake of 44-64 year old cohort



# New Research at Dalhousie:

## + Quantitative research:

Why do recent immigrants leave Atlantic Canada?:  
An application of the Longitudinal Survey of  
Immigrants to Canada (Yoshida & Ramos, 2009)

## + Qualitative research:

Formative evaluation of the Halifax  
Regional Municipality Immigration  
Action Plan (Kronstal & Grant, 2009)



# Immigrants' Experiences: Perception vs. Reality

- + In a 2005 survey Atlantic Canadians were the most likely (38%) to say it takes **less than a year** for immigrants to identify with a new region
- + Immigrants ranked Atlantic Canada **as the 2nd most difficult** region of Canada to feel at home in
- + Immigrants to Atlantic Canada have the **highest mobility rates in the country**: more than 30% leave the region after 2 years



# Defining a Welcoming Community

No universal understanding; usually involves  
**“discussions related to ethnocultural diversity,  
civic participation, equal access to services,  
and meaningful employment.”**

+ The Rural Development Institute (Brandon, MB)



# Welcoming *and* Inclusive

“A welcoming and inclusive community **embraces multiculturalism, offers resources and support for newcomers, and engages all sectors of the community** in committing to the long-term social and economic prosperity of the community.”

+ Welcome BC Project



# How Local Government can Influence Immigrant Flows

- + Limited municipal participation in selection process with Community Identified Nominees; greater opportunity in retention and integration
- + Welcoming Communities (WC): Asset based, emphasis is on the host community
- + WC Inventory: Availability of services, opportunities for engagement and participation, development of positive public attitudes, feedback



# Immigration Plans Include...

- + Social integration: service provision ('pools and schools'), staff training, public awareness, community events, inclusive programming and planning
- + Economic integration: internships, mentorships, corporate diversity plans
- + Political integration: consultation, committees (diversity & race relations)



# #1: Set a Clear Objective

- + 'Welcoming' immigrants is a good start, but may not be the appropriate goal for long-term retention

*Halifax is a welcoming city if you're a visitor. Boy, if you get off of that cruise ship and you walk the streets, you're wearing your name tag – people just know you're not from here. People are friendly and helpful. We'll show you around because we know that you're getting back on that cruise ship and leaving.*

Interview 3, HRM employee, 2009



## #2: Assess Local Capacity

- + Biggest challenge may be host community: Integration as a 2-way street
- + Access to networks determines social and economic outcomes; most jobs never advertised
- + Identify local concerns: Shared interests may be differently motivated

*'Come share my values' isn't really a persuasive business case. Interview 19, 2009, NGO volunteer*



# #3: Find out why Immigrants Come, Stay and Leave

- + Don't make assumptions: Immigrants' concerns and expectation may not be what you expect
- + 'Limiting' factors such as little experience with immigration can be an advantage in some instances (e.g., Dr. Ravalia of Twillingate, NFLD)
- + Many newcomers arrive in families, consider spousal and children's needs
- + Mixed results targeting francophones



## #4: A Bird in the Hand...

- + If you have international students in your community, include them explicitly in your plan
- + Ethnic and cultural groups may provide settlement services
- + Allow newcomers to give back to the community
- + Employment is necessary but not sufficient: In rural areas, 'favourable self-selection' remains key to retention



# #5: Seek Support from Government and SPOs

- + CIC Tool Box of Ideas for Smaller Centres

*Tool Box Resources Available at [www.icavictoria.org](http://www.icavictoria.org)*

- + Atlantic Metropolis Centre (5 research domains)

*Publications at [www.atlantic.metropolis.net](http://www.atlantic.metropolis.net)*

- + Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services

*Formally MISA and HILC: Information available at [www.misa.ns.ca](http://www.misa.ns.ca)*

- + Success in the West:

*Welcome Home: Saskatoon Immigration Action Plan*

*Attracting and Retaining Immigrants to Edmonton*



one final hint...



**+ EAT TOGETHER!** Sharing food is a great way to bridge cultural divides

Thank you and Questions



# Sources

Agrawal, S., Andrew, C., & Biles, J. (2009). Introduction Welcoming Communities: Planning for the Diversity in Canadian Cities. Plan Canada. 49, 4-5.

Akbari, Ather. "Immigrants in Atlantic Canada: A Profile" in Murphy, T., & De Finney, J. (2007). Our diverse cities: Atlantic Region. No.5. Spring 2008. 8-10. Ottawa: Metropolis Project.

Akbari, Ather and Wimal Rankaduwa. (2008.) "Socioeconomic Profiles of Immigrants in the four Atlantic Provinces: Phase II: Focus on Vibrant Communities." Unpublished report, used with permission.

Houle, Rene. "Secondary Migration of New Immigrants to Canada" in Reimer, W. C. (2007). Our diverse cities: Rural Communities. No. 5. Summer 2007. 16-24. Ottawa: Metropolis

Quell, Carsten. 2005. "An Overview of Regional and Multicultural Diversity in Canada." in Diversity in Canada Regions and communities. [Ottawa, Ont.]: Centre for Research and Information on Canada.

Roy, Jean-Olivier, Chedly Belkhodja and Nicole Gallant. "Francophone Immigration to Minority Communities: The Challenge for Rural Areas" in Reimer, W. C. (2007). Our diverse cities: Rural Communities. No. 5. Summer 2007. 80-84. Ottawa: Metropolis.

## Websites

The Rural Development Institute, Brandon University. Available at <http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/>. Accessed November 17, 2009.

Welcome BC. Available at [www.welcomebc.ca](http://www.welcomebc.ca) . Accessed November 17, 2009.

## Additional Sources

The Sunday Edition, "My Own Private Twillingate." CBC Radio Documentary, Broadcast November 8.

Andrew, Caroline. Personal communication; August 2009.

