



IMMIGRATION TO RURAL COMMUNITIES

ROMA Conference 2024





YMCA – Quick facts

YMCA Globally:

- Serves over 60 Million people with 12,000 locations in 120 countries

YMCA in Canada:

- Federation of 37 community-based charitable organizations

YMCA in Ontario:

- 8 YMCA Associations in Ontario
- YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka - 2nd largest





Purpose:

To foster a sense of belonging for all to improve the health and well-being in spirit, mind and body





YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

Employment Ontario (funded by MLITSD)

- Employment, Literacy, Canada Ontario Job Grant, Better Jobs Ontario
- Parry Sound, Midland, Huntsville/Muskoka region
- Serving approximately 5,000 job seekers each year





YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

Immigrant Services:

- Simcoe County
- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)
- Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)
- Childcare for Newcomer Children (CNC)
- 35 staff, 25+ languages
- Serving 30,000+ newcomers each year

* Funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)





Rural challenges - historical

- Transportation
- Housing
- Employment
- Access to health support
- Education



Social Determinants of Health

- Income and social status
- Employment and working conditions
 - Education and literacy
 - Childhood experiences
 - Physical environments
- Social supports and coping skills
- Healthy behaviours
- Access to health services
- Biology and genetic endowment
 - Gender
 - Culture
 - Race / Racism





Rural communities & Settlement

- Pre-2022
- Limited data (Census)
- Limited infrastructure for settlement
- Limited community coordination
- Volunteer and/or church groups



Global impact

- Immigration slow down during pandemic
- Ukrainian crisis
- Overwhelming demand for settlement and language
- Professionals not able to practice
- Experience not aligning with labour market needs
- Employers hiring immigrants



Local Immigration Partnerships (LIP)

- Support coordination in the planning and delivery of integration services to newcomers
- Facilitate the development and application of a community-based settlement plan for newcomers
- Strengthen the capacity of the community in supporting and welcoming newcomers by improving access to employment and social opportunities
- Achieve better results due to increased economic, social, and community participation by newcomers



Simcoe County LIP

- Established in 2011
- 30 member organizations
- 82,000+ immigrants in Simcoe County
- 30% + increase since 2016
- Community-based planning to improve social and economic outcomes for immigrant residents.

* Funded in-part by Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada (IRCC).



Methodology

- Reliance on data
- Postponed to capture 2021 Census data
- Surveys directed to immigrants
- Labour market consultations



Simcoe County Settlement Strategy

- Data-based decision-making
- Census, focus groups
- Focus on partnerships
- #Itstarts Campaign
- Newcomer Recognition Awards
- 2023 Settlement Strategy





Settlement Partners

- Settlement Services
- Language programs
- Employment Ontario
- Public, Post-Secondary Schools
- Libraries
- Ontario Works
- Housing supports/shelters
- Police Services
- LGBTQ1A2S
- Multicultural organizations
- Chamber of Commerce
- Small Business Enterprise Centre



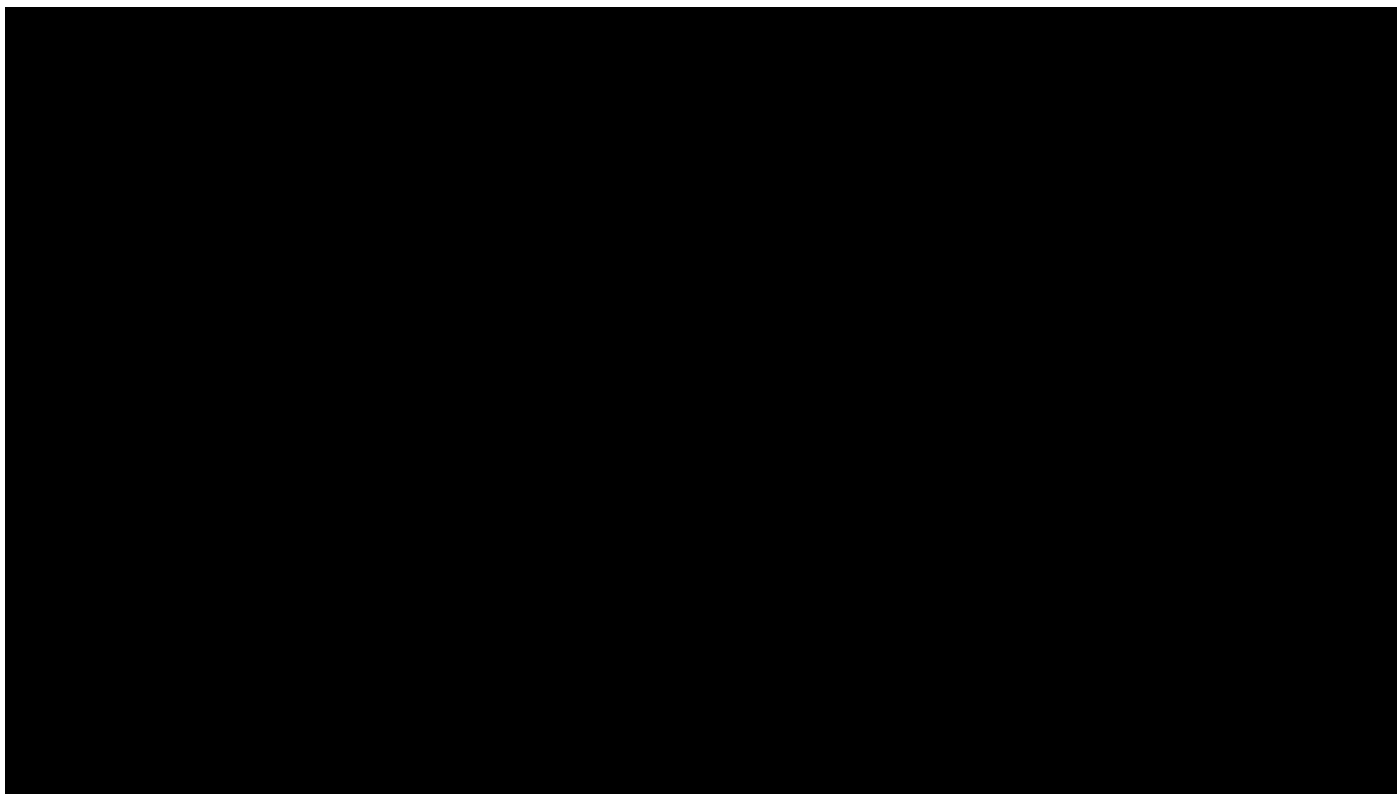






Case Study: Housing Navigator Pilot

- Newcomer housing support gap
- 61 Ukrainians in LTC
- YMCA Settlement Worker
- Home location
- Rent/relocation supports





**2023: Simcoe
County
Newcomer
Award for
Service
Excellence**

**2024: Ontario
Municipal Social
Services
Association
award for Local
Municipal
Champion**



Post-pilot

- In 6 months:
- Three housing initiatives
- 371 Ukrainians assisted in finding homes



Immigration Strategies

- Data informed approach
- Establish a Local Immigration Partnership
- Economic development strategies
- Support multi-cultural programs
- Establish anti-racism programming
- Partnerships with community partners
- Identify gaps
- Develop creative solutions



THANK YOU

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Building healthy communities

