

Reimagining Settlement:

Building Community and Belonging



A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

This methodology note is to accompany the *Four Case Studies of Diverse Settlement Service Providers*, and the *Reimagining Settlement Insights Report* that were completed in October 2024 under the auspices of the *ISANS Anti-Racism Project*.

The reports are based on a research learning inquiry that was conducted by People Development Ltd (co-leads David Fletcher and Anuj Jain) with members of the Case Study organizations during the period May to September 2024. These four organizations are: **BGC-CB** (formerly Boys and Girls Club), Cape Breton Regional Municipality; **Multicultural Association of Pictou County** (MAPC), New Glasgow; **Breaking Circus**, Kjiptuk (Halifax); and **East Preston Recreation Centre**, East Preston. These 4 organisations are indicative representatives of offering non-traditional settlement services to newcomers and new immigrants in Nova Scotia, especially focussed on socio-cultural dimensions of settlement. They all also have ethnically and racially diverse leadership and management structures. All four organisations deliberately engage with respective host communities as much as the newcomers, a somewhat noteworthy approach to settlement for this research purpose.

A qualitative participatory approach was used to capture first voices of the four organizations for developing the case studies. This was based on the understanding that they know their context, possibilities and challenges best (Creswell, 2007; Depoy and Gitlin, 1994). The desire was that the case studies reflect their own narratives, frames and stories of how they experience and view ‘settlement’ in their respective contexts.

The co-leads made visit(s) to each of the four organizations to visit the organizations’ facilities and to conduct interviews and focus group discussions. In addition, we had numerous online interactions and phone calls for further in-depth interviews and small group discussions with staff, board members, collaborators and other stakeholders. A list of who we spoke with is provided below.

All interviews were informal, open-ended, in-depth qualitative conversations that took a narrative approach to encourage people to “tell their story” and help build a case study of what the organization did in relation to settlement (Depoy and Gitlin, 1994). We chose this approach to explore the nuanced experiences of people working in non-traditional settlement organizations to bring to light their contributions and challenges. The approach to the conversations were informed by a mix of critical reflections, appreciative inquiry and asset-based approaches

(Gubrium and Holstein, 2003), maintaining a critical perspective and keeping a “reality check” on the cumulative narratives that emerged over time. The narratives from multiple sources were triangulated on an ongoing basis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Interviews in most cases were recorded and transcribed to capture highlights in ‘first voice’. This is a loose form of coding that moves the learning inquiry forward by identifying potential propositions, and more in-depth questions for further inquiry. These interview notes were supplemented by our own reflections and field notes following each interview. Some key individuals from each organization were interviewed 3 or more times to deepen the analysis and to follow-up on what we were hearing from other stakeholders.

Efforts were made to bring key participants together at a collective gathering retreat in August 2024 to validate findings and move towards insights and recommendations (Laws, Harper and Marcus, 2003). Not all organizations were able to attend this event, but they were still able to validate the interim reports produced at that time. Those who did attend found the networking valuable and appreciated the opportunity to step back and consider their organizations activities differently.

Representatives from each organization were also brought together for an online zoom workshop to discuss possible insights and recommendations, specifically related to funding and organizational issues. This conversation proved very useful for drafting the case studies and the insights document. Representatives were also asked to identify 3 to 5 photographs to illustrate the case studies, and to share why they chose these photos and what was the story behind them. This proved useful in illustrating the cases, and also in enriching the narrative once again with additional story.

David and Anuj, as co-leads then met to analyze and synthesize the information gathered through the interviews and other interactions and to write initial drafts of the documents. They initially used a grounded analysis approach to see what themes emerged out of the interviews (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008), and then using this open-ended list of themes delved back into other interview notes to see what enriched the description of these themes and what additional ideas came to light.

Each case study was drafted and circulated first to the organization itself to check for accuracy, needed additions and changes. This approach insured ownership for the cases, validated the story being shared and in various ways added important clarifications and nuances to the case (Creswell, 2007; Wilson, 2008).

Only after these cases were finalized was the insights / recommendations document drafted. An early draft of this document was then circulated together with all four verified case studies to all

four organizations in early September, again asking for their input and contributions to the final insights document. Their additions and comments were considered before a final draft was prepared and sent to a graphic artist for design.

Limitations:

This research learning inquiry was completed in a relatively short period of time – primarily during July and August 2024. That time was not the best for communicating with small community groups – they were both busy with summer programs and some key people were also taking time off. This sometimes limited the opportunity for interviews with more stakeholders and also specifically for bringing four organisations together for joint discussions which would have potentially brought out deeper collective analysis. As a Plan B, we had to revert to online conversation instead.

Initially there was the intention to have a guidance committee of concerned settlement sector stakeholders at the provincial level, to meet before the research commenced and a couple of times during the learning inquiry timeframe. For various reasons this could not take place. It would have potentially enhanced the relevance as well as ownership of the learning inquiry.

The co-leads are both familiar with settlement services ecosystem in Nova Scotia, but also benefitted from conversations with the ISANS Project Manager and an ARISSA staff member. The original plan was to also undertake an environmental scan of non-traditional settlement services provider organisations before or in parallel with this research to inform us of some of the broader issues and challenges community organizations and the sector were experiencing. Unfortunately, this environmental scan could not take place.

Despite these limitations, we are confident these case studies, insights and recommendations reflect the stories, struggles and aspirations of four racialized, non-traditional settlement organizations in Nova Scotia.

LIST OF PEOPLE AND ARTEFACTS CONSULTED

MAPC

Nanda Shirke, Chair MAPC

Manasi, Co-Chair

Michael O'Neill, MAPC board

Janet Proudfoot, Fusion Festival stage manager

Karen MacKay, MAPC board

Colleen McInnis, MAPC board

Lu Zhang, MAPC board

Rick Brazil, MAPC board
Ajay Shirke, Treasurer MAPC
Becky Cowen, Pictou County Partnership,
Nancy Dicks, Mayor of New Glasgow
Danny MacGillivray, Stellarton Mayor

Artefacts:

- -photo of board at AGM with heart in background
- <https://www.multiculturalpc.ca/index.php/gallery> on their website
- <https://www.facebook.com/mapcfusionfest/> with posters of past fusion fests
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/multiculturalassociationofpictoucounty> more recent info
- <https://commmapc.wixsite.com/fusion-festival> 2017 website
- <https://culturedays.ca/fr/events/d2e7a213-7fc9-4b9b-95f1-d1592670b337> - advert by partner organization in French for 2024 Fusion festival
- <https://www.saltwire.com/atlantic-canada/communities/among-friends-fashion-from-around-the-world-at-multicultural-fusion-festival-in-new-glasgow-ns-100896508/> article in SaltWire magazine (Mi'kmaq participation??)

BGC-CB

Chester Borden, ED, BGC-CB
Brittany Macdougall, Operations Manager, BGC-CB
Nadine Maclean, BGC-CB
Jeff Ward, BGC-CB Board Chair, and Knowledge Keeper, Membertou Heritage Park
Mike Vickers, Board member, BGC-CB
John Burton, Regional Director, BGCCB
Ankit Wadhwa, key informant, new immigrant community in Sydney

Artefacts:

- -photos, posters and newspaper clippings on wall
- -values videos suggested by Chester
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fPTm18HPN4>)
 - <https://www.bgcgh.ca/our-value-project-videos-showcases-african-nova-scotian-youth/>
- <https://www.bgccb.ca/>
 - <https://www.bgccb.ca/blog-post/celebrating-truth-and-reconciliation-at-the-bgc-cape-breton>
 - <https://www.bgccb.ca/blog-post/february-is-african-heritage-month>
 - <https://www.bgccb.ca/alumni>
- <https://cbregionalchamber.ca/blog/the-youth-are-the-future-bgc-cape-breton/>

- <https://www.saltwire.com/cape-breton/news/boys-and-girls-club-in-whitney-pier-looking-for-funding-to-finish-renovations-318878/> article re: 2019 fundraising to upgrade facilities
- mannequin challenge <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjQWyoWSZco&t=2s>
- 2021 interview with Chester
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CN_selpPB0c&t=216s&ab_channel=goCapeBreton.com
- recent interview with Family Services
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8Asdsa6tE4&t=2s&ab_channel=ZacharyBorden

BREAKING CIRCUS

Dawn Shepherd, co-founder

Ryan Gray, co-founder

Nithin Nedumparambil , mentee

Joy Chiekwe , Black Wellness Coop

Nikki Martin, Black Wellness Coop

Artefacts:

- <https://www.breakingcircus.ca/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/breakingcircus/>
- <https://www.cua.com/Home/AboutCUA/Our-Stories/Breaking-Circus/> story of grant awarded by credit union
- recent CBC interview
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Lm48cVVxPY&ab_channel=CBCNewsNovaScotia
- summary info sheet from Ryan

EPRC

Andreas Robinson, VP Board

Charnell Colley, Chair, Board

Raymond Wright, Treasurer, EPRC Board

Dolly Williams, President, EP Seniors,

Karen Hudson, Principal Auburn High School

Trina Fraser, ED, EP Day Care re: EPRC

Wayn Hamilton, ANS community elder re: EPRC

Artefacts:

- “CBC Still Standing” episode.
- Venue for 105-year-old birthday party; and other events for seniors club e.g.
<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/achievements-black-seniors-celebrated-east-090000974.html>
- <https://www.facebook.com/p/East-Preston-Rec-Centre-100071028828917/>

- (no postings since 2017)
- <https://www.eastprestonrecreation.ca/>
 - <https://www.liveinfinitus.com/generationalwealth> investment workshop
 - <https://www.liveinfinitus.com/easterclassic> basketball tournament
 - job ad for summer program coordinator.
- <https://globalnews.ca/news/3570530/east-preston-community-showcases-african-connection-at-canada-day-event/>

OTHERS

Anuj Jain, Key Informant, ACALA / Community Connections, Antigonish
 Hannah Renglich (research colleague)
 Simone Chia (ARISSA)
 Daren Okafo (ISANS)

REFERENCES

- Creswell, J.W. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S. and Smith, L.T. (eds) (2008) *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand oaks, California: Sage.
- Depoy, E. and Gitlin, L.N. (1994). *Introduction to research: multiple strategies for health and human performance*. St Louis, MO: Mosby.
- Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. (2003) *Postmodern interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. and Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research as Ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Black Point, NS: Fernwood.