

Pre28TH METROPOLIS CANADA CONFERENCE

Changing Course? Establishing Consensus On Canada's Immigration Future

March 11-13, 2026
Halifax Convention Center
Halifax, Nova Scotia

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Titles and information regarding all sessions appear in the official language they were submitted to by the session organizer.

Please note all poster presentations are listed at the end of the program as they run through the entirety of the conference.

A final and complete program with additional information (exhibitors, maps, etc) will be posted shortly.

28e congrès annuel Metropolis Canada

Changement de cap ? Établir un consensus sur l'avenir de l'immigration au Canada

11-13 mars 2026
Halifax Convention Center
Halifax, Nouvelle Écosse

PROGRAMME PRÉLIMINAIRE


Les titres et les informations concernant toutes les séances s'affichent dans la langue officielle dans laquelle ils ont été soumis par l'organisateur de la session.

Veuillez noter que toutes les présentations d'affiches sont listées à la fin du programme car elles sont exposées tout au long du congrès.

Un programme final et complet avec des informations supplémentaires (kiosques des exposants, cartes, etc) sera publié prochainement

Daily Schedule / Horaire quotidien

Wednesday, March 11th, 2026 / Mercredi 11 mars 2026

Registration / inscriptions: as of / à partir de 7:30 am
Opening Remarks / Mot de bienvenue: 8:45 am – 9 am
Opening Address: 9:00 – 9:15
Plenary Session 1 / Séance plénière 1: 9:15 am – 10:30 am
Break 10:30 am – 11:00 am
Block A / Bloc A: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm
Lunch 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm 
Block B / Bloc B: 1:45 pm – 3:00 pm
Break 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Block C / Bloc C: 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

Thursday, March 12th, 2026 / Jeudi 12 mars 2026

Registration / inscriptions: as of / à partir de 7:30 am
Opening Address: 9:00 – 9:15
Plenary Session 2 / Séance plénière 2: 9:15 am – 10:30 am
Break 10:30 am – 11:00 am
Block D / Bloc D: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm
Lunch 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm
Block E / Bloc E: 1:45 pm – 3:00 pm
Break 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Block F / Bloc F: 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

Friday, March 13th, 2026 / Vendredi 13 mars 2026

Registration / inscriptions: as of / à partir de 7:30 am
Presentation of the Metropolis awards of Excellence / Remise des Prix d'excellence Metropolis:
9:00 - 9:15
Plenary Session 3 / Séance plénière 3: 9:15 am – 10:30 am
Break 10:30 am – 11:00 am
Block G / Bloc G: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm
Lunch 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm
Block H / Bloc H: 1:45 pm – 3:00 pm
Break 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Block I / Bloc I: 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

Wednesday, March 11th, 2026 / Mercredi 11 mars
2026

Registration / inscriptions: as of / dès 7:30 am

Opening Remarks / Mot de bienvenue: 8:45 am – 9 am

Welcome and Opening Remarks by Conference Co-chairs

- **Paula Knight**, CEO, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and Chair of the Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARAISA), Conference Co-Chair
- **Emmanuel Nahimana**, Deputy Director General, La Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE) (The Acadian Federation of Nova Scotia), Conference Co-Chair

Mot de bienvenue et allocution d'ouverture des coprésidents du congrès

- **Paula Knight**, Directrice générale, l'Association des services aux immigrants de la Nouvelle-Écosse (ISANS) et présidente de l'Association des agences au service des immigrants de la région atlantique (ARAISA), co-présidente du congrès
- **Emmanuel Nahimana**, Directeur général adjoint, La Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE), co-président du congrès

Opening Address / Allocution préliminaire: 9:00 - 9:15 am

Opening Address

- **The Honourable Lena Metlege Diab**, MP, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (invited)

Allocution de bienvenue

- **L'honorable Lena Metlege Diab**, députée, ministre de l'Immigration, des Réfugiés et de la Citoyenneté du Canada (invitée)

Plenary Session 1 / Séance plénière 1: 9:15 am – 10:30 am

Making the Case for Immigration: the Medium and the Message

Describing Canada as a country of immigrants has been central to the story of the nation and is part of a vision to which many adhere. But that narrative seems to be shifting as Canadians

increasingly express concerns about the numbers of newcomers. Observers suggest that economic insecurities, housing availability and affordability and concerns around social cohesion underlie what some refer to as a backlash. Others insist that these concerns are largely attributable to misinformation about immigration and too many losing sight of the vital contribution of immigration to the country.

This plenary will invite leading voices from national media, thought leaders and influencers to offer their insights into how to best address the concerns around immigration and effectively make the case for immigration.

Session Chair: **Corinne Prince**, Special Advisor, The Metropolis Institute

- **Rob Roberts**, Editor in Chief at National Post
- **Tony Keller**, Journalist, The Globe & Mail
- **Anil Arora**, Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy, John F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Chief Statistician of Canada, Statistics Canada, 2016 to 2024
- **Dr. Rupa Banerjee**, Canada Research Chair in Economic inclusion, Employment and Entrepreneurship of Canada's Immigrants and Professor of Human Resource Management, Toronto Metropolitan University

Plaider en faveur de l'immigration : le medium et le message

Décrire le Canada comme un pays d'immigrants a longtemps été au cœur du récit national et fait partie d'une vision largement partagée. Toutefois, ce récit semble évoluer, alors que les Canadiens expriment de plus en plus de préoccupations quant au nombre de nouveaux arrivants. Certains observateurs estiment que les incertitudes économiques, la disponibilité et l'abordabilité du logement, ainsi que les enjeux liés à la cohésion sociale constituent la toile de fond de ce que certains qualifient de contrecoup. D'autres insistent sur le fait que ces préoccupations sont en grande partie attribuables à la désinformation sur l'immigration et au fait que trop de personnes perdent de vue le rôle vital de l'immigration pour le pays. Cette plénière réunira des figures éminentes de la presse nationale, des leaders d'opinion et des personnalités influentes qui viendront partager leurs points de vue sur les meilleures façons de répondre aux préoccupations liées à l'immigration.

Présidente de la séance: **Corinne Prince**, Conseillère spéciale, l'Institut Metropolis

- **Rob Roberts**, rédacteur en chef du National Post
- **Tony Keller**, journaliste, The Globe and Mail
- **Anil Arora**, chargé de cours auxiliaire en politiques publiques, John F. Kennedy School of Government, à l'université Harvard, statisticien en chef du Canada, Statistique Canada (2016–2024)

- **Dr. Rupa Banerjee**, titulaire de la Chaire de recherche du Canada sur l'inclusion économique, l'emploi et l'entrepreneuriat des immigrantes et immigrants au Canada, et professeure en Gestion des Ressources Humaines à Toronto Metropolitan University

Block A / Bloc A: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

A1

83 - Financial Empowerment for Newcomers: Reducing Barriers Through Inclusive Planning (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Newcomers often arrive with determination but face financial systems that can feel unfamiliar or overwhelming. This session shares how the Canadian Foundation for Financial Planning (CFFP) helps bridge that gap through practical, culturally aware workshops and individualized guidance. We will introduce our programs—Financial Planning for Parents, Financial Planning for Newcomer Entrepreneurs, Getting Started in Canada, and Money Basics—which focus on real settlement challenges, from budgeting and housing decisions to navigating work, benefits, and early entrepreneurship. We will also highlight how our one-to-one planning support builds confidence, supports informed decision-making, and helps newcomers move toward greater financial stability.

- **Paul Bishop**, Canadian Foundation for Financial Planning
- **Reem Jarrar**, Canadian Foundation for Financial Planning

A2

62 - Social Resilience and the Urban Migrant Experience: Thinking about Gender and Race (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

As Canada takes stock of its immigration programs, the factors that promote successful settlement have taken centre stage. Presenters draw on case studies in Canadian cities to explore the conditions and supports that help international migrants thrive, not just survive. Focusing on resilience, presentations examine how gender and race shape the impacts of immigration status and family dynamics on migrants' success responding to the inevitable challenges of living in a new place. The presenters highlight migrants' agency, especially their success creating programs and resources as well as drawing on diverse institutions to facilitate settlement. In Canadian cities, class and race contribute to diverse forms of gender inequality.

- Moderator: **Tsomo Tenzin Chime**, University of Toronto
- **Jill Hanley**, McGill University, *Immigrant Families' Capacities to Weather a Financial Storm: Racial Disparities in Economic Resilience*

- **Rupaleem Bhuyan**, University of Toronto, *Reimagining the Course: Lessons from Migrant Women's Leadership in Transforming Canada's Immigration Future*
- **Tsomo Tenzin Chime**, University of Toronto, *Reimagining the Course: Lessons from Migrant Women's Leadership in Transforming Canada's Immigration Future*
- **Sultana Jahingir**, South Asian Women and Immigrants' Services, *Reimagining the Course: Lessons from Migrant Women's Leadership in Transforming Canada's Immigration Future*
- **Alexandra Charette**, Concordia University, *Civic Engagement as a Response to Immigrant Women's Labor Market Exclusion in Montreal*
- **Jenna Hennebry**, Wilfrid Laurier University, *How Can Temporary Migration be Gender-Responsive: learnings from research with international students and migrant workers*

A3

54 - Recent findings from IRCC's Settlement Program Evidence Base (Program or Policy Changes / Changements de programmes ou de politiques) (EN)

IRCC will present on three different topics. First, using the most up-to-date data available, we'll present an overview of trends we are seeing under the first year of the new agreements. Next, we'll provide an overview of the 2025 Settlement Outcomes Report (will hopefully have been published at that time). Last, we'll provide more recent research findings and link it to how that evidence is informing the ongoing renewal of the Program.

- **Meghan Foran**, IRCC, *Looking Forward: How Evidence is Informing Evolution*
- **Fadoua ElBouamraoui**, IRCC, *2025 Settlement Outcomes Report*
- **Meghan Foran**, IRCC, *Recent Trends in IRCC's Settlement Program Data*

A4

79 - Renforcer la capacité des organismes : compétences socio émotionnelles pour l'emploi (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (FR)

Comment mieux outiller les organismes pour développer les compétences socioémotionnelles et linguistiques essentielles à l'employabilité des nouveaux arrivants francophones en contexte minoritaire? La SRSA, en collaboration avec la COFA, présentera les démarches et constats préliminaires de son analyse des besoins, visant à orienter la création de ressources andragogiques adaptées et à stimuler la collaboration intersectorielle. Cette approche jette les bases d'un projet ambitieux pour renforcer la capacité organisationnelle et améliorer l'efficacité des services offerts aux communautés immigrantes.

- **Julie Rodier**, La Société de recherche sociale appliquée, *S'unir pour bien accueillir: Compétences en action pour l'emploi*

- **Lydiene Guidon**, Coalition ontarienne de formation des adultes, *Approche intersectorielle : bâtir des partenariats pour renforcer la capacité*
- **Ona Bantjes-Ràfols**, La Société de recherche sociale appliquée, *Analyse des besoins : constats préliminaires et priorités pour l'action*
- **Jean Cédric Kouam**, La Société de recherche sociale appliquée, *Analyse des besoins : constats préliminaires et priorités pour l'action*

A5

12 - The Settlement Practitioner Wellbeing Framework: A Systems Approach to Sustainable and Equitable Work (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Canada's immigration future depends on the sustainability of those who uphold it, frontline settlement workers. This presentation introduces the Practitioner Wellbeing Framework, developed by the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work in partnership with the Canadian Immigrant Women's Association. Grounded in lived experience and organizational research, the framework moves beyond individual resilience to address systemic stressors such as underfunding, vicarious trauma, and unrecognized cultural labor within immigrant serving agencies. It proposes evidence-based organizational and policy reforms that embed equity, accountability, and trauma-informed leadership to make practitioner wellbeing central to sustainable service delivery.

- **Tara Collins**, University of Calgary
- **Ahlam Fakhri**, University of Calgary
- **Nathanael Hammond**, University of Calgary
- **Mariam Ismail**, University of Calgary
- **Jessie Shen**, University of Calgary
- **Eri-Lee Laing**, University of Calgary
- **Debbie Jansen**, University of Calgary
- **Tabitha Pruden**, University of Calgary

A6

125 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block

125a - Advancing Intersectional Approaches: Exploring Strategies Centering Youth to Tackle Unemployment and Promote Civic Participation (Educational lecture / Présentation éducative) (EN)

Youth face systemic barriers that contribute to unemployment and limit civic participation. This workshop examines these challenges and explores solutions through labour market insights and

community-based practices, highlighting strategies such as trauma-informed engagement, intercultural dialogue, and holistic, youth-centered program design to create lasting impact. Initiatives like EmpowHER and Employability Skills for Youth (ES4Y) empower youth, especially those facing barriers, through education, training, and meaningful work experiences supported by mentorship, career coaching, and financial assistance. The workshop will demonstrate how these initiatives equip youth with the skills and confidence to transition into the labour market.

- **Ayesha Bhikha**, Achēv
- **Samantha Iyere**, Achēv
- **Therese Guidolin**, Achēv
- **Kosalina Vignarajah**, Achēv
- **Althea Samuels**, Achēv

125b - From Access to Impact: Reducing Disadvantage in Newcomer Workforce Programs (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Newcomers to Canada face persistent barriers in accessing workforce programs, from language and credential gaps to limited familiarity with sector expectations. This roundtable uses insights from EPIC HC and EVolve Skills to explore strategies that reduce disadvantage and expand equitable access. Discussion will highlight systemic barriers, inclusive program design, culturally responsive supports, and employer engagement practices that improve outcomes. Participants will gain practical, evidence-informed approaches to strengthening access, employment readiness, and meaningful workforce participation for immigrants and newcomers. These insights aim to inform policy, program planning, and community collaboration across sectors.

- Moderator: **Shobana Thangavadivel**, Achēv
- **Tanvi Sukhija**, Achēv

A7

15 - Creating Child Care Opportunities and Jobs Through Newcomer Entrepreneurship (MARCH) (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

This interactive workshop examines the MARCH program as a practical model for supporting newcomer entrepreneurs to develop and operate child care businesses in response to local labour market and child care needs. Grounded in program delivery experience, the session focuses on how entrepreneurship supports, sector-specific training, and community partnerships can be structured to support newcomer economic integration while expanding child care capacity.

Presenters will walk participants through the program framework, including participant recruitment, training components, mentorship, and stakeholder engagement. The session will emphasize real-world implementation considerations, challenges encountered, and adjustments made during delivery. Participants will be invited to engage in discussion around applicability, scalability, and adaptation to different regional and policy contexts.

- **Leanne May**, Saskatoon Open door Society, Women Business Hub WBH, Childcare Services Unit, and Saskatchewan's Ministry of Education
- **Ashraf Mirmontahai**, Saskatoon Open door Society, Women Business Hub WBH, Childcare Services Unit, and Saskatchewan's Ministry of Education

A8

33 - From Intention to Integration: The Power of Pre-Arrival Preparation (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

In a time of shifting immigration priorities and reduced intake targets, effective pre-arrival preparation is essential to newcomer success. This session highlights how coordinated pre-arrival efforts - including S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Active Engagement and Integration Program (AEIP), JVS Toronto's pre-arrival employment and mentorship services, and CCIS as a key provincial partner - equip newcomers with early, targeted support. Through accurate settlement, employment, and destination-specific information, along with mentorship opportunities and labour market insights, newcomers arrive better prepared and more confident. Presenters will share outcomes and best practices demonstrating how a connected pre-arrival ecosystem strengthens newcomers.

- **Joseph Lopez**, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- **Irene Vaksman**, JVS Toronto
- **Hasmik Asmaryan**, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

A9

17 - From Crisis to Stability: How Wraparound Services Transform Outcomes for Asylum-Seeking Families (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

This presentation examines how Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services and the Peel CAS's Child Welfare Immigration Centre of Excellence implement wraparound service models to respond to the intersecting immigration, child welfare, health, and settlement needs of asylum-seeking youth and families. Drawing on practice-based examples, the session highlights coordinated pathways, culturally responsive supports, and resilience-building approaches that reduce system fragmentation, promote stability, and support long-term integration for families, including unaccompanied and separated children.

- **Hashim Alhussaini**, Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services
- **Liz Okai**, The Child Welfare Immigration Centre of Excellence, Peel CAS
- **Mandisa Sifelani**, The Child Welfare Immigration Centre of Excellence, Peel CAS

A10

18 - Financial Empowerment Interventions: A Newcomers' Pathway to Economic Resilience (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Newcomers to Canada encounter substantial adjustments to personal financial management, influenced by disparities between income and expenditures, shifts in household roles, and limited prior exposure to credit systems. These factors often destabilize financial decision-making and asset management upon arrival. Certified financial coaches at Centre for Newcomers provide structured interventions to enhance clients' financial capability. This presentation, in collaboration with Aspire Calgary Collaborative, examines the demographics and psychographics of participants accessing financial coaching services and analyzes emerging outcomes that suggest improved financial resilience among immigrant clients.

- **Moderator: Dario Ontolan**, Centre for Newcomers, Calgary
- **Peeyush Agnihotri**, Centre for Newcomers, Calgary
- **Margaret Yu**, Aspire Collaborative Calgary
- **Arti Vasudev**, Centre for Newcomers, Calgary

A11

47 - Canada's Humanitarian Crisis: The Impact of the Multi-Year Levels Plan on Refugee Families (Educational lecture / Présentation éducative) (EN)

While the new Immigration Levels Plan prioritizes economic goals, it includes a significant reduction in targets for humanitarian and refugee programs. JIAS Toronto and [other SAH TBC] will discuss the impact of this new Plan on refugee families, sponsoring communities and Canadians at large. The session will highlight Canada's longstanding humanitarian commitments, including the history and role of the PSR program in shaping national responses to global displacement. It will examine how the immigration level reductions affect refugee sponsorship pathways, family reunification, and long-term settlement outcomes, and offer insights on sustaining humanitarian leadership amid shifting demographic priorities.

- **Lisa Kisel**, JIAS Toronto

A12

56 - Confronting Xenophobia through Community Solutions: a collaborative workshop (Practical Workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

This workshop convenes participants for a practical and reflective dialogue on how organizations are responding to xenophobia and hate in their communities. Ackno

wedging the complexity of this work and the absence of one-size-fits-all solutions, the session creates space for participants to share how their organizations are addressing these challenges within diverse mandates, roles, and local contexts—both in supporting staff and in engaging with the communities they serve.

Rooted in lived experience and applied practice, the discussion will feature concrete examples of initiatives led by Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), including community safety and well-being efforts, staff care and support strategies, inclusion activities, and collaborative campaigns. Through case studies and facilitated discussion, participants will explore practical steps organizations can take to respond to incidents of xenophobia while keeping staff and community members safe and supported during difficult conversations.

The workshop also emphasizes shared learning and coordination, encouraging participants to consider how collective approaches, shared resources, and national collaboration can strengthen community safety, promote well-being, and advance inclusion across Canada.

- **Reuben Hodari Clarke**, Toronto South Local Immigration Partnership/National LIP Secretariat
- **Nicolas Tellez-Espana**, Diversecity Community Resources Society
- **Natasha Martinez**, Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council
- **Mounir Nasri**, Toronto South Local Immigration Partnership

A13

57 - Partnership Funding for Resilient Futures: Best Practices and Challenges Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

This roundtable discussion on Partnership Funding Models will explore collaborative approaches to funding within the settlement sector. Participants will discuss the benefits and challenges of partnership models, including financial management, accountability, and relationship dynamics. Through open dialogue and shared experiences, the discussion will highlight how these models can strengthen collaboration, support smaller organizations, and encourage innovation. Emphasizing transparency, mentorship, and mutual learning, participants will explore partnership funding as a strategic approach for enhancing sector resilience, equity, and sustainability, particularly in a time of limited resources and shifting settlement priorities.

- **Moderator: Alexandra Almeida**, Manitoba Possible
- **Samantha Lee**, Manitoba Possible, *Welcome and introduction*
- **Alexandra Almeida**, National Cultural Brokers Project, *Community Data*
- **Taicy Robertson**, Manitoba Possible, *Benefits*
- **Estefany Suarez**, National Cultural Brokers Project, *Challenges*

A14**27 - Developing an Indigenous Engagement Summit for Saskatchewan Settlement Workers** (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Although Saskatchewan has the second highest population percentage of Indigenous peoples out of Canadian provinces, a gap in understanding persists between newcomers and Indigenous peoples. In 2025, SAISIA responded to TRC Call to Action #93 by offering Building Connection: An Indigenous Engagement Summit for Saskatchewan Settlement Workers. Participants learned directly from Knowledge Keepers, gaining the information and relationships needed to dispel stereotypes and lead Indigenous-newcomer relations at their service providing organizations. Our presentation will explore the process of planning this event, including consultations with and participation from Indigenous leaders, and how the event strengthened sectoral knowledge of Indigenous cultures.

- **Amber Parker**, Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) Plus Coordinator, Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA)
- **Crystal Francis**, Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator, Carlton Trail College
- **Bobby Jo Ouellette**, Settlement and Program Development Manager, Saskatchewan Intercultural Association
- **Lara Paul**, Intercultural Programs Manager, Saskatchewan Intercultural Association

A15**63 - Train to Hire: Jordan Pharmacy Licensure Pathway** (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Immigration target reductions introduced in 2024, have seen a more significant drop in International Mobility migrants arriving to work in the East Coast than to other provinces. How will these regional economies fare? The Train to Hire - Jordan Pharmacy Licensure Pathway initiative is a novel collaboration that provides; a recertification training opportunity, direct employment, and the relocation of a cohort of skilled refugees and nationals from Jordan to meet the market demand of pharmacists in Nova Scotia. The project invites policy makers to consider the expansion of labour market driven immigration in tandem with expanded complementary pathways for refugees.

- **Abdullah Olewi**, World University Service of Canada (WUSC)
- **Lauren Zwicker**, Jordan Pharmacy Licensure Pathway (JPLP) / Nova Scotia Pharmacy Regulator (NSPR)
- **Tristan Park**, Pharmacy Association of Nova Scotia (PANS)

A16

142 - Local Agencies Serving Immigrants – A Collaborative Approach (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This panel highlights the benefits of LASI's long-standing collaborative model in enhancing newcomer service delivery in Ottawa. With established communication pathways, shared knowledge, and coordinated advocacy, LASI members reduce duplication, respond swiftly to shifting needs, and advance client-centered, anti-racist practices, and Indigenous teachings/learnings. Panelists will discuss how collective investments in infrastructure, mentorship, and technology expand each agency's capacity, enabling participation in complex or resource-intensive initiatives. Attendees will gain insight into LASI's governance, decision-making, and strategic planning processes—demonstrating how collaboration strengthens impact in the settlement sector.

- **Moderator: Kathleen Holloway Jun**, YMCA of the National Capital Region
- **Andrea Gardner**, Jewish Family Services Ottawa
- **Jephtée Elysée**, Centre d'établissement, de soutien et d'orientation Communautaire (CÉSOC)
- **Myriam Meknim**, Catholic Centre for Immigrants
- **Mengistab Tsegaye**, World Skills Employment Centre

A17

141 - Modernizing Credential Recognition: Lessons and Innovative Solutions from Alberta's FCAC Process (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Amid shifting immigration targets and persistent labour shortages, Alberta's Foreign Credential Advisory Committee undertook one of the most comprehensive examinations of credential recognition in Canada since the Pan-Canadian Framework. Drawing on surveys, focus groups, jurisdictional research, and consultations with internationally trained professionals, regulators, employers, immigrant-serving agencies, and post-secondary institutions, the committee's work culminated in a Final Report tabled in the Alberta Legislative Assembly. This roundtable explores evidence-informed solutions to improve licensure pathways and workforce access, sharing lessons from Alberta's multi-stakeholder process and practical approaches adaptable across sectors and jurisdictions.

- **Moderator: Doha Melhem**, Pivotal Research Inc
- **Deidre Lake**, Executive Director of AIMGA
- **Jay Nagendran**, Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta, former CEO
- **Glenys Reeves-Gibbs**, Executive Director, Alberta Federation of Regulated Health Professions
- **Susan McGillivray**, Interim VP, People & Health Professions, Alberta Health Services

Block B / Bloc B: 1:45 pm – 3:00 pm

B1

8 - Bridging Barriers: Culturally Responsive Mental Health Services for Newcomers (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Newcomers often arrive with experiences that do not fit within Western systems. The Immigrant Education Society (TIES) bridges these gaps through its Mental Health and Family Programs, offering free, rapid-access, culturally responsive care. The Healthy Minds counselling program provides first-language support delivered by counsellors who reflect communities they serve. Beyond therapy, other programs strengthen family relationships, build social connections, and foster belonging. By centering culture, language, equity, TIES demonstrates how community-based organizations can create accessible, inclusive, sustainable mental health services for newcomers, offering a replicable model for other settlement and mental health sectors across Calgary.

- **Lateef Habib**, The Immigrant Education Society
- **Jisha Philip**, The Immigrant Education Society

B2

95 - Humanizing Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program: Policy, Practice, and Lived Realities (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This panel will explore Canada's evolving immigration policy and its impact on employers, Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs), and the communities they support. With TFWs increasingly in the public spotlight—and misconceptions rising—panelists will discuss available supports, systemic gaps, and unintended outcomes that heighten vulnerability. Through lived experiences, frontline insights, and practical recommendations, the discussion will amplify TFW voices and showcase the Prairie TFW Hub, a collaborative model unique in Canada. The session concludes with a call to action for stronger partnerships, improved policies, and more inclusive community-based support.

- Moderator: **Jessica Juen**, CCIS
- Moderator: **Steve Reynolds**, Regional Connections
- **Alejandra Gil**, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, *Unintended Consequences: How Immigration Policy Shifts Affect Migrant Workers*
- **Tina Rempel**, Regional Connections, *Building Resilience: Community-Based Support for Migrant Workers in Changing Canada*

- **Ramlah Iqbal**, Saskatoon Open Door Society, *The Prairie TFW Hub: A Unique Model for Support Migrant Workers*

B3

23 - Building a Resilient Atlantic Canada: Integrated Strategies for Newcomer and International Student Retention (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

Atlantic Canada's demographic and economic future hinges on its ability to attract and retain newcomers and international students. This workshop moves beyond attraction to explore the integrated, multi-stakeholder strategies required for successful long-term retention. Bringing together academic researchers, settlement agencies, and regional economic development bodies, we will dissect the key pillars of integration: from pre-arrival supports and post-graduation pathways to meaningful employment and community belonging. We will present groundbreaking data on retention trends, showcase effective service delivery models, and facilitate a solutions-oriented discussion on aligning immigration policy with regional workforce need.

- Moderator: **Megan Morris**, Association of New Canadians
- **Tony Fang**, Memorial University, *Immigration and skilled labour force in Atlantic Canada: The role of employers and international students*
- **Ather Akbari**, Saint Mary's University, *Social life on campus and job-education matching for international students: Some evidence from Atlantic Canada*
- **Jim Murphy**, Association of New Canadians
- **Dale Crawford**, Atlantic Workforce Partnership
- **Paula Knight**, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)

B4

24 - Bridging Gaps, Building Futures: Tailored Pathways for a Changing Labour Market (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

As Canada recalibrates its immigration levels, bridging evolving labour-market needs with newcomers' skills has never been more critical. This session will explore how tailored, cross-sectoral programs can effectively connect skills gaps while addressing the complex realities of today's workforce. Drawing on collaborative initiatives between CCIS, ISANS, and Carbon Management Canada, we'll showcase innovative programming models that align employer demand with immigrant talent through customized training and partnerships. The discussion will emphasize how community organizations, industry, and policy can converge to "change course" toward sustainable inclusion and competitiveness in Canada's future economy

- Moderator: **Hasmik Asmeryan**, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)
- **Hasmik Asmeryan**, Director, Business, Employment & Training Services, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS), *From Insight to Impact: Building Cross-Sector Partnerships to Address Labour Market Shortages*

- **Tamara Gale**, Director of External Relations and Communications, Carbon Management Canada, *Changing Course Through Collaboration: Building Carbon Management Talent Pipelines*
- **Taylor Yeomans**, Manager, Pre-Arrival and Employment Transition, ISANS, *Supporting Successful Labour Market Transitions: ISANS' Pre-Arrival and Employment Transition Pathways*

B5

129 - Changing Terms? Is the language of Multiculturalism in Canada on the way out? (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This panel explores the strengths and tensions of Canada's multiculturalism model, asking whether it successfully fosters the transmission of cultural heritage across generations or whether it risks weakening a shared national identity. Drawing on perspectives from policy, scholarship, and lived experience, panelists will examine how multiculturalism shapes belonging, social cohesion, and civic attachment in an increasingly diverse Canada, and consider what balance—if any—can be struck between cultural pluralism and a common national narrative.

- **Jack Jedwab**, President & CEO, ACS-Metropolis Institute
- **Chedly Belkhodja**, Professor, School of Community and Public Affairs, Co-director Quescren, Concordia University
- Additional speakers to be confirmed

B6

60 - Social Resilience and Migrant Integration in Canadian Cities (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

As Canada revises its immigration policies and levels, this session examines a social resilience approach to building a nation of immigrants. Case studies in Ontario and Quebec cities by a multidisciplinary team of researchers and practitioners investigate the settlement and integration of immigrants, international students, foreign workers, and refugee claimants. This new research illustrates how federal, provincial, and municipal policies and diverse institutions ranging from grassroots churches to government - funded immigrant-serving agencies influence integration. The presenters propose strategies to facilitate integration of different migrant groups in cities of various sizes, challenging notions of absorbing capacity.

- Moderator: **Sultana Jahingir**, South Asian Women and Immigrants' Services
- **Christina Gabriel**, Carleton University, *"Wanted/Not Wanted": Resilience and International Students in Canada*
- **Chedly Belkhodja**, Concordia University, *The New Face of Regionalisation of Immigration in Quebec*

- **Valerie Preston**, York University, *Immigration, Resilience, and the Absorbing Capacity of Canadian Cities*
- **John Shields**, Toronto Metropolitan University, *Social Resilience, Settlement Agencies, and Crisis*

B7

48 - Advancing Collaboration for IEHP Integration in Canada: Lessons and Insights from WES Partners (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

Hosted by WES, this panel will explore systemic challenges that internationally educated health professionals (IEHPs) face in Canada and present collaborative strategies to advance equitable workforce integration. This dynamic session will feature key WES partners including other funders who are playing an active role in supporting IEHPs across Canada. It will showcase evidence-based approaches that leverage data, advocacy, and coalition-building to influence policy and practice. By centering lived experiences and actionable solutions, the session aims to share insightful recommendations, build consensus on reforms that address credential recognition barriers, and foster sustainable career pathways for skilled professionals.

- Moderator: **Sifat Yusuf**, Program Manager at WES Mariam Assefa Fund
- Moderator: **Marina Nuri**, Director Canada Strategy & Programs at WES Mariam Assefa Fund
- **Deidre Lake**, Executive Director at Alberta International Medical Graduates Association (AIMGA)
- **Cameron Moser**, Associate Vice President, Services and Program Development at ACCES Employment
- **Lara Dyer**, Chief Solutions Officer (Americas) at Talent Beyond Boundaries

B8

1 - Bridging Communities Through Service: Scaling Holistic Models for Newcomer Youth Integration (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

This presentation explores how the Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth (CBFY) responded to a dramatic surge in newcomer youth demand by developing and implementing the Integrated Services Delivery Model (ISDM). The model integrates services, empowers staff, and aligns strategy with practice to deliver personalized, high-impact support. With over 10,000 youth served annually and a 270% increase in demand since 2021, CBFY's approach offers a scalable blueprint for national replication. The session will highlight systemic innovation, community service as a catalyst for integration, and the role of data in driving sustainable change.

- **Cristina Balamban**, The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth

- **Lorraine Kinsman**, The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth

B9

59 - Innovating Asylum Services: The Peel Collaborative Model (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

This session showcases how innovative partnerships between municipalities and community agencies can transform asylum settlement services. Highlighting the Region of Peel's collaboration with COSTI and Polycultural, we explore a service model designed to support asylum seekers while in temporary accommodation through coordinated housing solutions, wraparound supports, and integrated pathways to stability. Participants will gain actionable strategies for building collaborative frameworks that drive impact and resilience in local communities.

- **Marwan Ismail**, Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services
- **Hashim Alhussaini**, Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services
- **Anita Stellinga**, COSTI
- **Vithieyah Atputharajah**, COSTI

B10

22 - Comblér le fossé linguistique: coordonner les services anglophones et francophones dans un contexte migratoire en mutation (Table ronde) (BIL)

AAISA et RIFA présenteront leurs services indirects, ainsi que les stratégies et défis liés à la collaboration entre fournisseurs anglophones et francophones. Cette table ronde offrira un échange interactif pour identifier des pistes concrètes visant à améliorer la coordination bilingue, la rétention des nouveaux arrivants et l'accès équitable aux services. Ensemble, nous explorerons comment une collaboration renforcée peut soutenir un établissement cohérent et un développement régional équitable.

Bridging the language gap: Coordinating English and French - Speaking Services in a Changing Migration Context (Roundtable) (BIL)

AAISA and RIFA will share about their indirect services, as well as the strategies and challenges associated with collaboration between English-speaking and French-speaking providers. This roundtable will offer an interactive exchange to identify concrete ways to improve bilingual coordination, retention of newcomers, and equitable access to services. Together, we will explore how enhanced collaboration can support consistent settlement and equitable regional development.

- **Chloé McBean**, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)
- **Amina Houfah Khoufah**, RIFA
- **Elaine Malinis**, Professional Development Lead, AAISA

B11

64 - Attraction, Integration, and Retention Capacities of Northern Canada: Insights from the TAIGA RISE Project (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Tailored Attraction, Integration, and Retention Strategies for Northern Ecosystems (TAIGA RISE) is a nationally funded, three-year project supported by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), designed to strengthen northern Canadian communities' capacity to attract, integrate, and retain newcomers. In its first year, the project collected survey data from 200 individuals—100 residents living in northern communities and 100 from outside the North—to explore experiences and perceptions of life in these regions. In this workshop, we will capture the story of northern communities from these dual perspectives, highlighting the contrasts and connections between lived experiences and external perceptions.

- **Fatemeh Kazemi**, Senior Researcher, Centre for Immigrant Research, The Immigrant Education Society (TIES)
- **Hamed Kazemzadeh**, Research Associate, Centre for Immigrant Research, The Immigrant Education Society (TIES)
- **Kreisha Hilario**, Manager, Centre for Immigrant Research, The Immigrant Education Society (TIES)

B12

73 - Language Barriers in the Settlement Process in the Greater Moncton Area (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This bilingual panel will examine how language barriers affect newcomer settlement in the Greater Moncton Area across multiple contexts. Panelists will explore linguistic challenges in specific schools, workplaces, and in the situation of intimate partner violence, as well as the role of language as a key tool for social integration. The discussion will highlight an on-going collaborative project that aims to create a series of self-guided learning tools to support community and institutional responses surrounding interpretation. Bringing together voices from municipal government, non-profit organizations, students, and academia, the session encourages conversations on inclusive strategies for improving communication in multilingual contexts.

- **Kelsey Cameron**, Université de Moncton, *Managing Language Barriers in a Moncton Highschool for Newcomer Students*
- **Nour Gamra**, Université de Moncton, *Barrières linguistiques en situation de violence entre partenaires intimes*

- **Elizabeth Jonah**, Multicultural Association of the Greater Moncton Area, *Managing Language Diversity in the Workplace*
- **Erika Cantu**, Partenariat local en immigration, *Language as an Integration Tool*
- **Anne Beinchet**, Université de Moncton, *Co-construction d'outils de formation autoportée en interprétation pour une agence d'établissement*

B13

74 - Logic Models Made Practical: Strengthening Evaluation Capacity for Settlement Services (Practical Workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

Developing a logic model helps organizations track their progress and aligns with funders' requirements. It can be challenging, but it can bring enormous benefits to settlement organizations. Participants will learn in this interactive workshop how logic models can improve existing programs, guide effective data collection, and align with IRCC reporting requirements. We'll also explore how evaluation can showcase success and support funding proposals for 2026. Through a hands-on exercise, attendees will create a simple logic model tailored to their services and leave with practical tools to enhance learning, accountability, and storytelling within their organizations. This workshop is part of PROSPECTS.

- **Julie Rodier**, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, *From Insight to Action: Using Logic Models to Evaluate and Improve Your Program Design and Delivery*
- **Taylor Shek-wai Hui**, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, *Making the Case: Leveraging Evaluation to Demonstrate Success for Future Funding*
- **Kim Lehrer**, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, *Building the Foundation: Logic Models as a Roadmap for Effective Data Collection*

B14

75 - Co-Designing a New Digital Model for Settlement Information Delivery to Newcomers (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Refugee 613 is scaling up its national Newcomer Info Hub (NIH) service for digital settlement information through expanded content production, enhanced dissemination models, and deeper engagement with sector stakeholders. Metropolis attendees are invited to join an interactive co-design exercise for a new pilot for information dissemination to newcomers. Participants are invited to bring their knowledge, expertise and insights to help shape the design and early testing of this digital model. Refugee 613 will also share preliminary findings from its most recent research into digital settlement information delivery.

- **Laila Joud**, Communications Manager, Refugee 613
- **Louisa Taylor**, Executive Director, Refugee 613

B15**78 - Healing Through Creativity: Navigating Stress and Building Belonging** (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

In challenging times and with limited resources, pressure and stress fall on both service providers and newcomers. Staying well, emotionally, socially, and physically helps us build resilience and navigate these pressures more effectively. This interactive session blends artmaking, theatre-making, and storytelling to explore creativity as a collective, humanizing response to newcomer and refugee integration experiences and empowerment. In addition, the roundtable will create space for service providers to name current challenges and focus on strategies that can carry us forward together.

- **Moderator: Bonface Beti**, Resilia Community Wellness Centre
- **Kari McClusky**, Resilia Community Wellness Centre, *Vicarious Trauma/Resilience Program Coordinator*
- **Damhat Zagros**, Resilia Community Wellness Centre, *Youth Facilitator - Be That Leader Program*
- **Bonface Beti**, Resilia Community Wellness Centre, *Facilitator Vicarious Trauma and Resilience*

B16**136 - Educational supports for immigrant youth in/entering the labour force** (Educational lecture / Présentation éducative) (EN)

In Canada, immigrant youth are still facing unique barriers in the labour force and higher unemployment rates than the general population. Factors affecting employment include education, systemic discriminations, racism, unequal access to resources and support, and the lack of access to the social capital and networks needed to navigate and access the current labour force. This panel sheds light on the pipeline of employment, focusing on supports and programs designed for immigrant youth. The findings will provide practical implications on best practices in the education system that could lead to positive economic and social outcomes in the future.

- **Nancy Mitchell**, Diversity Institute
- **Lisa Leoni**, Peel School Board
- **Mohammad Rezai**, Winnipeg School Division
- **Abdikadir Ahmed**, Winnipeg School Division
- **Monique Burque**, Winnipeg School Division

B17**120 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block****120a - Health Connect: Breaking Barriers for Newcomer Women in Healthcare** (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

The YWCA Health Connect program addresses systemic barriers faced by newcomer self-identified women who are internationally educated health professionals (IEHPs) navigating Canada's credential recognition process. Delivered in partnership by YWCA Metro Vancouver and YWCA Toronto, and funded by ESDC, Health Connect combines mentorship, wraparound supports, and employer engagement to accelerate integration into the healthcare workforce. This session will share collaborative strategies, highlight outcomes from Toronto and Vancouver, and discuss key lessons learned.

- **Joanna Jaskielewicz**, YWCA Toronto
- **Juliana de Souza**, YWCA Metro Vancouver

120b - Labour Market Integration of Highly Skilled Immigrant Women in Canada's Health Workforce (Educational lecture / Présentation éducative) (EN)

This session examines the employment integration of highly skilled immigrant women in Canada's healthcare sector. Using internationally educated nurses as a central case, the presentations explore the policy reforms needed to reduce system-level barriers in health care, address inequities in wages and working conditions across Canada's care economy, and strengthen workforce integration strategies. The presentations highlight evidence-informed strategies for creating successful conditions for newcomer women with the goal of advancing equitable workforce integration.

- **Valentina Antonipillai**, McMaster University, *Wage Dynamics and Working Conditions of Skilled Immigrant Women in Canada's Care Economy*
- **Andrea Baumann**, McMaster University, *Strengthening Community Care Workforce Integration for Internationally Educated Nurses*
- **Mary Crea-Arsenio**, McMaster University, *System-Level Barriers: Policy Solutions to Enhance Workforce Integration in Health Care*

Block C / Bloc C: 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm**C1****7 - IMPRESS: Building Evaluation Capacity and Data-Driven Service Delivery in Canada's Settlement Sector** (Research presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Want to evaluate your programs and improve your services, but unsure how to proceed? IMPRESS is here to help. Our platform provides easy-to-use evaluation templates, customizable multilingual surveys, and dashboards to easily interpret results. Join this interactive session to learn how you can put our tools to use

- **Kathleen Holloway Jun**, YMCA of the National Capital Region, *What is IMPRESS? Boosting Evaluation Capacity in Settlement Services*
- **Andrew Dawson**, YMCA of the National Capital Region, *IMPRESS Online Platform: Data Collection Made Easy*
- **Rinila Haridas**, YMCA of the National Capital Region, *IMPRESS Performance Measurement Toolkit*

C2

31 - From British Colombia to Québec: Responses to Climate Disasters Affecting Migrant Labor (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This panel examines how recent climate-related events—such as floods, heatwaves, and wildfires—in British Columbia and Québec have impacted temporary foreign workers in these provinces. Researchers and community organisations will draw on interviews and the experiences of community organizations to document the role of institutions in shaping responses to crises triggered by climate change. By analyzing strategies implemented during these extreme weather events, the panel seeks to highlight vulnerabilities and adaptive practices targeted towards temporary foreign workers. The discussion will offer insights into institutional accountability and resilience, contributing to broader debates on labor, migration, and climate justice in Canada.

- **Véronique Tessier**, RATTMAQ (NGO), *What is the role of community organisations in responses to climate disasters affecting migrant labour in agriculture?*
- **Sandra Arruda**, Université Laval, *The case of Québec*
- **Danièle Bélanger**, Université Laval, *The case of Québec*
- **Geneviève Fournier**, Université Laval, *The case of Québec*
- **Michael Hooper**, UBC, *The case of BC*
- **Nour-Lyna Boulgamh**, Harvard (PhD student), *The case of BC*

C3

34 - Resettlement to Integration: Strengthening support systems for refugees experiencing mental distress across Canada (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) partners across Canada have unique perspectives on improving equitable access and successful integration for Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs). This workshop highlights promising practices, lessons learned and

challenges in supporting refugee mental health through National partnerships and local Provincial initiatives.

- **Moderator: Aamna Ashraf**, Senior Manager, Office of Health Equity, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
- **Wuraola Dada-Phillips**, Research Coordinator, Office of Health Equity, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), *Improving Resettlement Assistance Programs (RAPs) models of service for clients in mental distress: A National Expansion*
- **Kathryn Friesen**, Executive Director, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)
- **Marokh Yousifshahi**, Senior Manager, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)
- **Božana Šljuka**, Settlement Manager, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)
- **Alicia Rodriguez**, Wellbeing for All Project Coordinator, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), *Wellbeing for All: Building Inclusive, Diverse, and Trauma-Informed Support for Newcomers*

C4

38 - Retaining Talent in the Settlement Sector - The Good, The Bad and The Ugly (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

We all know the struggles of retaining talented staff in a high stress lower wage non-profit sector AND the cost both in time and money because of high staff turnover. In this workshop, JIAS Toronto will share some of the strategies we have employed to retain our workforce, centered around fostering professional development and reducing burnout in our staff using trauma-informed practices. We will also facilitate a discussion with attendees about their challenges and successes in this area so that we can support one another in addressing this thorny issue.

- **Laura Gold**, JIAS Toronto
- **Victoria Koren**, JIAS Toronto

C5

61 - Research in Rural Saskatchewan: Building Partnerships to Strengthen Immigration Knowledge, Policy, and Practice (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

Rural Canada is rapidly changing through immigration, yet research, policy, and data often remain urban-focused. This panel showcases findings from four Saskatchewan-based projects, highlighting newcomer inclusion in schools, challenges in rural data access, gendered pathways of economic contribution, and the cultural value of play in settlement. Together, these presentations demonstrate how rural research generates new knowledge, disrupts assumptions, and shapes more responsive policies. Participants will gain practical insights into forming

research partnerships across universities, service providers, and communities to strengthen equity and representation in Canada's immigration future.

- **Conor Barker**, Mount Saint Vincent University, *Inclusion experiences of newcomer youth in Southwest Saskatchewan*
- **Edith Montesclaros**, East Central Newcomer Welcome Centre, *Challenges in securing region-specific settlement statistics in rural Saskatchewan*
- **Janine Hart**, Prairie Gateway Settlement Services, *Understanding the value of play in a global context: The role of cultural artefacts in playful learning*
- **Deanna Baje**, Southwest Newcomer Welcome Centre, *Immigration, Gender, and Rural Growth: Lessons from Filipinas in Southwest Saskatchewan*

C6

65 - Connecting to Communities: Local Approaches to Immigrant Integration (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This panel examines how connecting immigrants into skilled roles drives economic growth and strengthens communities. With perspectives from across Canada, we will explore how the National Connector Program is adapted to overcome barriers to services, close skills gaps, and reduce underemployment, ensuring immigrants are meaningfully integrated into Canada's job market.

- Moderator: **Robyn Webb**, National Connector Program
- **Alida Campbell**, Halifax Connector Program
- **Nausheen Ali**, Ignite Fredericton
- **Doug Piquette**, Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council (ERIEC)
- **Enver Naidoo**, Westman Immigrant Services
- **Laura Aguirre Polo**, AMAL Youth and Family Centre
- **Melissa Fletcher**, Georgian College

C7

72 - Building Inclusive and Scalable Models and Culturally Informed GBV Risk Assessment to Optimize Access and Supports for Immigrant Women and Families (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This presentation highlights CIWA's 28-month research initiative on innovative supports for immigrant and refugee women and families experiencing gender-based violence, alongside the University of Calgary's work on culturally attuned GBV risk assessment. Together, these projects examine barriers such as stigma, technology inequities, and challenges in online counselling, while assessing how current risk tools overlook the lived realities of immigrant women. The presentation introduces a culturally grounded, scalable model that strengthens inclusion,

support pathways, and cross-sector collaboration. It also identifies gaps in existing risk assessments and proposes culturally responsive approaches to improve safety planning and interventions.

- **Moderator: Ahlam Fakhri**, University of Calgary
- **Monica Sesma Vazquez**, University of Calgary, *Promising Practices for Supporting Immigrant Women and Families Impacted by Gender-Based Violence: Building Inclusive and Scalable Models for Access and Support*
- **Shamsa Mistry**, Canadian Immigrant Women Association, *Advancing Culturally Informed GBV Risk Assessment for Immigrant and Culturally Diverse Women*

C8

67 - Advancing a Federal Foreign Credential Recognition Strategy: Successes, Challenges, and Next Steps (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

Internationally trained professionals (ITPs) seeking employment in regulated professions continue to face complex, long, and costly foreign credential recognition (FCR) and licensure processes. Within the federal government, FCR falls across the mandates of three departments: ESDC, IRCC, and Health Canada. Like P/T governments, the federal government has supported significant improvements to FCR. However, these actions have resulted in decades of incremental progress pointing to the need for a systemic approach to advance FCR through a coordinated multilateral effort supporting ITPs through from pre-arrival, immigration, and settlement, to labour market integration.

- **James Seyler**, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- **Michelle Owen**, Health Canada
- **Erin Connell**, Employment & Social Development Canada

C9

71 - Regional Approaches to supporting the Asylum Crisis (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Amid Canada's reduced 2024 immigration targets, Newfoundland and Labrador developed the Humanitarian Migrants Program as an innovative, employment-led relocation model to address rising asylum claims across the country and regional labour shortages in the province. Combining virtual and in-person recruitment with strategic partnerships among service providers and municipalities in other provinces, the program integrates housing and employment supports to enhance retention and sustainable settlement. This initiative has achieved a high household employment rate, with many Humanitarian Migrants working in rural NL and most potential candidates willing to relocate to these areas. Its success offers valuable national policy insights and practical lessons for regional integration strategies amid shifting immigration priorities.

- **Maggie Peyton**, Director of Immigration Policy and Settlement, Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, *Employment First: NL's Humanitarian Migrants Program as a Policy Blueprint – Provincial Government Perspective*
- **Khalid Al Hariri**, Director of Employment Services, Association for New Canadians, *Employment First: NL's Humanitarian Migrants Program as a Policy Blueprint – Provincial Government Perspective*

C10

84 - Changing Course Through Community Voices: Inclusion, Health Equity, and Intercultural Engagement (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This workshop illustrates how community insights can strengthen newcomer inclusion, health equity, and intercultural engagement. Presenters will showcase an intergenerational creative writing model that supports identity, belonging, and cross-cultural understanding among immigrant seniors; mixed-methods findings that uncover prenatal and postnatal care challenges and demonstrates how Gateway's holistic navigation model can reduce disadvantage; and results from Calgary Language Assessment and Referral Centre (CLARC) focus groups designed to capture newcomer perspectives on access, equity, and service gaps. Together, these presentations highlight how community-informed and strengths-based approaches can advance more inclusive, responsive, and

- **Moderator: Vibha Kaushik**, Immigrant Services Calgary
- **Wissam Shalaby**, Immigrant Services Calgary, 1. *Intergenerational and Intercultural Inclusion Through Creative Writing*
- **Aida Patient**, Mount Royal University, 1. *Intergenerational and Intercultural Inclusion Through Creative Writing*
- **Natalie Meisner**, Mount Royal University, 1. *Intergenerational and Intercultural Inclusion Through Creative Writing*
- **Raffi Minas**, Immigrant Services Calgary, 2. *"I Just Needed Someone to Guide Us": Documenting Barriers to Prenatal and Postnatal Care for Newcomer Families Through the Gateway Lens*
- **Zohaib Faridi**, Immigrant Services Calgary, 2. *"I Just Needed Someone to Guide Us": Documenting Barriers to Prenatal and Postnatal Care for Newcomer Families Through the Gateway Lens*
- **Megan Gill**, University of Calgary, 2. *"I Just Needed Someone to Guide Us": Documenting Barriers to Prenatal and Postnatal Care for Newcomer Families Through the Gateway Lens*, 3. *Educational Counselling and Information Support: A Study of Client Journeys and Expectations*
- **Abdallah Abushammala**, Immigrant Services Calgary, 3. *Educational Counselling and Information Support: A Study of Client Journeys and Expectations*

C11

94 - How to Engage SMEs for Fair and Effective Newcomer Recruitment and Retention (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

98% of Canadian firms are SMEs, employing 2/3 of the private sector workforce. As the Canadian labour market continues to diversify, hiring and onboarding newcomer talent in organizations with limited HR capacity presents a challenge. This workshop will highlight three current projects: SME challenges in hiring and retaining immigrant talent, as identified in a recent Conference Board of Canada report, “Small Business: Big Impact”; the experience of Talent Beyond Boundaries in partnering with SME’s to recruit and retain skilled immigrants; and the development and workplace implementation of a new inclusion framework under the Manitoba Immigrant Employment Council that proactively identifies and prevents hate in the workplace. Q&A to follow.

- **Rania Younes**, IECBC (C-G)
- **Alice Craft**, Conference Board of Canada (C, D, G)
- **Lara Dyer**, Talent Beyond Boundaries (B-C)
- **Dana Bergman**, Trellis Pathways
- **Magdalene Cooman**, Mags Management & Consulting Ltd.

C12

128 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block

128a - Creating Safe Spaces for Newcomer Youth to Think, Question, and Connect (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

In addition to engaging with new social and digital spaces, newcomer youth face numerous challenges as they juggle multiple identities and navigate misinformation, prejudice, and social fragmentation. Saskatoon Open Door Society uses the Philosophy for Children (P4C) framework, where newcomer youth co-construct a community of inquiry that builds critical, creative, caring, and collaborative thinking. By creating a safe space for intercultural dialogue and strengthening democratic literacy from an early age, P4C supports inclusive citizenship. This workshop could benefit educators, youth workers, and researchers seeking effective community-based approaches to youth engagement and social cohesion.

- **Mehdi Ebrahimpour**, Saskatoon Open Door Society

128b - Stories of Belonging: Exploring Paths to Intercultural Understanding (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Canada’s growing cultural diversity makes meaningful, respectful, and safe intercultural learning increasingly important. This joint presentation by the Saskatoon Open Door Society and the

Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society highlights approaches to diversity education with a focus on storytelling. From an online platform featuring lived experiences and creative expression to a project that brings together Indigenous communities and newcomers, participants are encouraged to engage across cultures in thoughtful and transformative ways. These initiatives create spaces where stories foster understanding, strengthen connections, and show how people build healthier communities in Canada.

- **Doris Wang**, Saskatoon Open Door Society
- **Mehdi Ebrahimpour**, Saskatoon Open Door Society
- **Angelika Valchar**, Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
- **Sarah Haynes**, Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society

C13

107 - Working together to have a greater impact on French-speaking newcomers (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

The modernized Official Languages Act strengthens IRCC's commitment to increasing Francophone immigration outside Quebec and to welcoming and retaining French-speaking newcomers in Francophone communities from coast to coast to coast. This workshop will bring together IRCC, Collège La Cité, lead of Connexions Francophones, and CSS of Alberta. IRCC will first set the scene and present on the Francophone Integration Pathway, highlighting the importance of the "by and for Francophones" approach. CSS and La Cité, as settlement service providers, will share their vision of an effective collaboration and practical strategies to support Francophones newcomers.

- Moderator: **Géraldine Lefebvre**, Collège la Cité
- **France St-Pierre**, Collège la Cité
- **Fabienne Labatut**, IRCC
- **Margaryta Marion**, Catholic Social Services

C14

80 - Meeting Newcomers Where They Are: Flexible, Convenient Language Assessment Delivery (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Amid shifting immigration targets and evolving settlement priorities, equitable access to language assessment is vital for newcomer success and Canada's competitiveness on the global stage. Language proficiency opens doors to education, employment, and integration, yet newcomers in remote or underserved communities often face barriers. The Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Assessment (CLBPA) addresses these challenges through flexible delivery, offering in-person and remote options tailored to diverse needs. Come learn about innovative practices that reduce disadvantage, share impact evidence, and explore how

adaptable assessment models help Canada sustain strong integration outcomes in a changing immigration landscape.

- **Monique Melbourne**, Achēv
- **Jennifer Tanudjaja**, Achēv

C15

26 - Local Levers of Immigration: Provincial and Municipal Perspectives in Atlantic Canada's Future (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

Provinces and municipalities play pivotal roles in shaping immigration outcomes, yet their engagement varies widely across Canada. This session brings together settlement providers, an umbrella organization, and a regional economic development agency in Atlantic Canada to share how they engage with these levels of government—and how they envision deeper partnerships. Through diverse perspectives from across the region, we will explore governance gaps, coordination challenges, and opportunities to align immigration strategies with population growth and economic priorities amid shifting federal targets.

- Moderator: **Olive Ozoemena**, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
- **Ben McNamara**, New Brunswick Multicultural Council, *Coordinating for Impact: Strengthening Provincial-Municipal Alignment in Immigration*
- **Daniel Rito**, Envision Saint John, *Population Growth as Economic Strategy: Municipal and Provincial Levers for Attraction and Retention*
- **Olive Ozoemena**, ISANS, *On the Ground: How Settlement Organization Engagement Shapes Newcomer Success*

C16

119 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block

119a - Credential Recognition in the Trades: Bridging Barriers & Building Pathways for Internationally Trained Workers (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

The Bridge to Red Seal Program demonstrates how innovative credential recognition initiatives can strengthen workforce participation among internationally trained tradespeople. This session shares lessons in identifying barriers, explores strategies to overcome language and education gaps, and shares evidence how strategic partnerships support newcomer integration in the skilled trades sector

- **Jesse Johnsen**, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, Canadian District.

119b - Demography Challenges, Policies, and Programs | Economic Migrants/Skilled workers (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

This qualitative study examines how skilled South Asian immigrant women navigate professional integration in Canada. Using interviews and thematic analysis, I found that participants relied more on personal agency, cultural adaptability, emotional resilience, and informal networks than on formal settlement or employment services. They described these services as generic, entry-level oriented, and misaligned with their needs, revealing gaps in credential recognition, sector-specific guidance, and gendered caregiving pressures. The women emphasized that "one-size-fits-all" programs fall short and called for tailored, profession-specific, gender-responsive support for skilled immigrant women within Canada's economic migration stream.

- **Saima Maheen**, York University

C17

20 - Teaching in the GenAI Era: Practical AI Literacy for Language Instructors (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

This session examines how language educators can build AI literacy to enhance communicative and task-based language teaching. Grounded in research on adult learning, technology integration, and emerging frameworks for AI use in second language education, it demonstrates strategies for evaluating and adapting generative AI output, designing safe classroom tasks, and supporting learner autonomy. Drawing on LINC and EAL examples but relevant across additional-language programs, participants will work with adaptable prompts, see classroom applications, and gain access to a sector-wide professional learning resource to strengthen AI literacy across teaching teams nationwide, along with a planned follow-up study.

- **Hanna Jodrey**, Saskatoon Open Door Society

Thursday, March 12th, 2026 / Jeudi 12 mars 2026

Registration / Inscriptions: as of / dès 7:30 am

Opening Address / Allocution préliminaire: 9:00 - 9:15 am

Opening Address

- **The Honourable Nolan Young**, Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration, Government of Nova Scotia

Allocution de bienvenue

- **L'honorable Nolan Young**, Ministre du Travail, des Compétences et de l'Immigration, Gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse

Plenary Session 2 / Séance plénière 2: 9:15 am – 10:30 am

Making the Case for Immigration: What do Employers Want?

“Sustainable levels of newcomers” is the term used by the Government of Canada in presenting its Immigration Levels Plan for 2026-2028. This objective calls for decreases to temporary resident arrivals and stabilizing permanent residents at annual levels that remain twenty percent below admissions in 2024. Employers are often seen as playing a key role in determining immigration levels as they’ve collectively sought to inform Federal Government’s decisions. Employers are also sensitive to public opinion on immigration and may be taking into consideration when making recommendations to Government. When it comes to immigration where does the business community currently stand? Speakers will be asked to address that question.

Session Chair: **Patrick MacKenzie**, CEO, Immigrant Employment Council of BC

- **Dr. Ather Akbari**, Professor, Chair Atlantic Research Group on Economics of Immigration, Aging and Diversity, Saint Mary’s University
- Speakers to be announced

Plaider en faveur de l'immigration : que veulent les employeurs ?

« Niveaux durables de nouveaux arrivants » est l’expression utilisée par le gouvernement Canadien pour présenter son Plan des niveaux d’immigration pour la période 2026-2028. Cet objectif prévoit une réduction des arrivées de résidents temporaires ainsi qu’une stabilisation du nombre de résidents permanents à des niveaux annuels demeurant inférieurs de vingt pour cent aux admissions de 2024.

Les employeurs sont souvent perçus comme jouant un rôle clé dans la détermination des niveaux d'immigration, puisqu'ils cherchent collectivement à éclairer les décisions fédérales. Ils sont également sensibles à l'opinion publique sur l'immigration et peuvent en tenir compte lorsqu'ils formulent des recommandations au gouvernement.

En matière d'immigration, quelle est la position actuelle du milieu des affaires ? Les conférenciers seront invités à répondre à cette question.

Présidence : Patrick MacKenzie, PDG, *Immigrant Employment Council of BC*

- Intervenants à confirmer

Block D / Bloc D: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

D1

2 - Rencontre, construction identitaire, appartenance comme réponses au choc discriminatoire (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (FR)

En réponse au choc discriminatoire, La Maisonnée se présente comme un espace de l'interculturel en action. Le choc discriminatoire se définit comme une rupture de reconnaissance. Comment le transformer en levier de dialogue ? En articulant les dimensions identitaires, sociales et symboliques des parcours migratoires aux pratiques d'accompagnement concrètes. La rencontre interculturelle transforme la rupture (blessure) identitaire en ouverture en créant un espace de parole, de réciprocité et de reconnaissance mutuelle. À La Maisonnée, cette rencontre prend forme dans les pratiques d'accompagnement (espaces de dialogue, médiations culturelles, interventions communautaires) où la différence devient une ressource plutôt qu'un obstacle.

- **Wadih Karam**, La Maisonnée, *Rencontre et dialogue: une réponse au choc discriminatoire*
- **Guy Drudi**, Université de Montréal, *Construction identitaire et appartenance*

D2

6 - Weaving Worlds: A Transnational Writing Collaboration (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Our presentation is about a transnational writing collaboration we have implemented this year. Students in Writing classes at universities around the world are given the same assignment, which invites them to write about and photograph a cultural artefact that is important to them. Students present their writing and photograph to the class and then write a reflection about the impact of the assignment including what they learned from each other. Students who consented

to the next part of the project, will have their work displayed in a website gallery as well as a public art installation at a local mall and library.

- **Helen Lepp Friesen**, University of Winnipeg
- **Eunhee Buettner**, University of Winnipeg

D3

10 - Navigating Transitions: International Students' Integration, Belonging, and Settlement in Canada (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This workshop examines the diverse pathways and challenges international students face as they transition from study to settlement in Canada. Presentations address key themes including educational integration, institutional supports, housing affordability, and immigration policies shaping post-graduation outcomes. Discussions highlight how first-year interventions foster belonging and retention, how structural and policy contexts influence students' navigation of support systems in a smaller city, and how access to affordable housing affects overall wellbeing and settlement success. Collectively, these studies reveal the complex interplay between education, policy, and place in shaping inclusive experiences for international students.

- **Min-Jung Kwak**, Saint Mary's University, *Mobilizing Intellectual Capital and Navigating Support Systems in Intellectual Periphery*
- **Emmanuel Kyeremeh**, Toronto Metropolitan University, *Integration and Settlement Outcomes Among Immigrant and International Student*
- **Courtney McKay**, Saint Mary's University, *From Transition to Retention: An exploratory study on the impact of first year experience interventions on international students' transition experience and retention outcomes*
- **Steven Smith**, Saint Mary's University, *From Transition to Retention: An exploratory study on the impact of first year experience interventions on international students' transition experience and retention outcomes*
- **Katelynn Carter-Rogers**, St. Francis Xavier University, *From Transition to Retention: An exploratory study on the impact of first year experience interventions on international students' transition experience and retention outcomes*
- **Bright Kwakye**, Saint Mary's University, *International Student Experiences in Rental Housing Market in Halifax, Nova Scotia*

D4

99 - A Solution-Based Approach to Reducing Barriers for Immigrant and Refugee Youth: Strengthening Supports for Canada's Future (Practical workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

This session offers a youth-centered, solution-focused look at reducing barriers for immigrant and refugee youth. It examines how redesigning systems, expanding supports, and engaging communities can foster equity and help youth thrive while advancing Canada's immigration and

inclusion goals. The workshop outlines key challenges, disrupted education, trauma, language barriers, discrimination, mental-health stress, and complex systems, and highlights effective strategies such as mentorship, community programs, cross-sector collaboration, culturally safe and trauma-informed services, and family-centered supports. Participants will gain insight on strengthening youth inclusion and contribution to Canada's future.

- **Moderator: Mercy Francis**, Mediator, GLHCSS
- **Joshabelle Suman Chineye**, GLHCSS
- **Pascaline Nsekera**, GLHCSS
- **Ines Ghozzi**, AIDE

D5

4 - Two Sides of the Line: Exploring Gaps and Opportunities in Ethnocultural Crisis Response (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Ethnocultural communities in Canada often face significant barriers when accessing crisis support, including cultural misunderstandings, communication gaps, and limited representation within crisis response systems. This roundtable aims to explore these systemic and relational gaps by comparing the experiences of ethnocultural callers with the perspectives of service providers. Drawing on qualitative, community-based research, presenters will discuss findings on barriers to culturally safe care and engage participants in dialogue about inclusive and equitable crisis response practices. Participants will leave with insights and practical strategies to strengthen cultural responsiveness, inclusion, and relational approaches within **Canada's ev**

- **Monica Sesma Vazquez**, University of Calgary
- **Mariam Ismail**, University of Calgary
- **Tara Collins**, University of Calgary
- **Ahlam Fakhri**, University of Calgary
- **Nathanael Hammond**, University of Calgary
- **Kenia Wright**, University of Calgary
- **Jeri-Lee Lommond**, University of Calgary
- **Jessie Shen**, University of Calgary
- **Tabitha Pruden**, University of Calgary
- **Debbie Jansen**, University of Calgary
- **Larrissa Wakatsuki**, University of Calgary

D6

35 - Expansive Pathways: Towards Meaningful Newcomer Volunteer Engagement (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Many newcomers are encouraged to volunteer to gain "Canadian experience." However, the direct path from volunteering to paid employment is often overstated and creates unrealistic expectations. Newcomers continue to face structural and cultural barriers to volunteering related

to access, communication, representation, and organizational readiness. Drawing on Volunteer Canada's research and CSCNL NVOLVE's program implementation, the workshop will offer program models that adopt a more holistic view of newcomer volunteering. The workshop will support organizations in identifying barriers while supporting practical and relational motivations; a necessary condition for advancing integration, belonging, and meaningful civic participation.

- **Bahar Hashemi**, Community Sector Council of NL (CSCNL)

D7

87 - Complementing Efforts for Collaborative Impact: Building Strategic Alliances to Strengthen Immigrant Retention in Rural Nova Scotia (Annapolis Valley) (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Collaboration is essential to strengthening immigrant retention in rural Nova Scotia. Over the years, ISANS, Valley REN, NS Works, and other partners have built strong partnerships to support newcomers and local employers across the region. In this workshop, we'll share how organizations across the Annapolis Valley are working together to tackle key integration challenges: employment, social inclusion and accessibility. You'll hear stories of partnership in action and learn how these efforts are helping newcomers thrive, strengthening communities, addressing labour needs, and boosting the local economy.

- **Nicola MacNevin**, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
- **Sucheta Arora**, Valley REN
- **Sylvia Calatayud**, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia

D8

58 - Connecting the Dots: Efficient Referrals and Tracking Client Journeys for Economic Integration (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Join us for an interactive roundtable filled with practical activities and real-world insights. Economic integration is vital for newcomer success, yet fragmented services often create barriers. This session will explore how coordinated referrals and integrated tracking systems streamline access to language training, employment services, and settlement programs. Through client journey mapping and data-driven strategies, we'll show Achêv is using collaborative models and technology-enabled solutions reduce duplication, improve efficiency, and deliver holistic support, always putting the client at the centre of everything we do.

- **Samantha Iyere**, Achêv
- **Andrea Williams**, Achêv
- **Natalie Renton**, Achêv

D9**49 - Expanding Refugee Claimants' Access to Employment Services: A Collaborative Model** (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

This two-year pilot tackles systemic barriers refugee claimants face in securing employment, including credential recognition, labour market navigation, and limited access to timely services. In partnership with Matthew House Ottawa, World Skills created a tailored employment model for claimants in emergency or transitional housing, delivering supports soon after arrival and bridging service gaps as well as staff capacity building. In year two, the initiative expands to three additional housing providers, strengthening system capacity and fostering cross-sector collaboration that leverages expertise and resources to support refugee claimants in taking initial steps toward meaningful career pathways with support, knowledge and confidence.

- **Liam Reynolds**, Matthew House Ottawa
- **Barb Hogan**, World Skills Employment Centre

D10**50 - Strengthening the Capacity of Frontline Staff through Accessible, Responsive Training and Organizational Policy Shift** (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Frontline workers in the settlement sector experience significant barriers to participating in capacity building programs. A professional development follow-up survey indicated that lack of time was the primary challenge for 56.25% of English and 53.33% of French respondents to participate in professional development programs. Current organizational policies fail to account for staff workload, restricting participation in professional development. To enhance skills among staff, employers should integrate training into regular workflows, adjust workloads, and recognize training as a core responsibility. This approach can improve service quality, organizational effectiveness, and staff retention.

- **Tecla Namusonge**, OCASI

D11**81 - Accelerating Newcomer Readiness for Construction Career** (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Newcomers often face major barriers when entering skilled trades, including limited training access, unfamiliar apprenticeship systems, and challenges connecting with employers. This workshop presents an innovative employment pathway that closes these gaps by offering entry-level construction training, hands-on skill development, and direct links to hiring partners. It also outlines a clear career path, showing how newcomers can progress from foundational training to apprenticeships and into long-term trade careers. Participants will explore how

coordinated training, strong employer engagement, and targeted supports reduce disadvantage and create equitable access to high-demand roles, highlighting practical strategies and lessons from successful inclusion partnerships.

- **Bernice Shukairat**, Centre for Newcomers
- **Karen Rutherford**, ARCA (Alberta Roofing Contractors Association)

D12

82 - From Arrival to Impact: Designing Programs that meet Canada's Talent Crunch. (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

From Arrival to Impact: Designing Programs that meet Canada's talent crunch.

In this moderated & interactive discussion, we'll unpack emerging approaches for aligning immigrant employment programs with Canada's labour market & employer needs.

Together, we'll compare and contrast promising models for modernizing programs and consider how to better connect newcomer talent with in-demand roles across Canada. Main topics will include Canadian workplace culture, communication training and supports for both pre- and post arrival immigrants in skilled trades and targeted labour market needs.

- Moderator: **Nicola MacNevin**, ISANS
- **Marina Ayvazyan**, JVS Toronto, *Language & Skilled Trades*
- **Dina Desveaux**, ISANS, *Canadian Workplace Culture*
- **Yaj Suresh**, ISANS, *Employer Engagement*

D13

89 - From Assessment to Action: Language Assessors as Gateways to Learning Pathways (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Language assessment is a critical starting point for guiding newcomers toward educational and career pathways. At Immigrant Services Calgary's Language Assessment and Referral Centres, assessors evaluate language proficiency, provide tailored educational counselling, and make informed referrals to LINC programs, academic upgrading, and community services. Through strong collaboration with SPOs and funders, ISC LARCs maintain real-time program and waitlist information to support timely, accurate referrals. This session highlights cross-sector collaboration that strengthens newcomer integration in Calgary and Southern Alberta and shares best practices that enable smooth transitions into learning pathways and civic potential.

- Moderator: **Vibha Kaushik**, Immigrant Services Calgary
- **Abdallah Abushammala**, Immigrant Services Calgary, *The Client Journey Through Language Assessment; Newcomer Integration: Effective Referrals to LINC and*

Community Partners; Learning from Experience: Successes and Next Steps in Referrals (Real-world examples of effective cross-sector collaboration)

- **David Whitehead**, Immigrant Services Calgary, *The Client Journey Through Language Assessment*
- **Jana Ciobanu**, The Immigrant Education Society, *Newcomer Integration: Effective Referrals to LINC and Community Partners*
- **Kerry Howard**, The Immigrant Education Society, *Newcomer Integration: Effective Referrals to LINC and Community Partners*
- **Sameena Arif**, Immigrant Services Calgary, *Newcomer Integration: Effective Referrals to LINC and Community Partners*
- **Lorraine Kinsman**, Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth, *Learning from Experience: Successes and Next Steps in Referrals (Real-world examples of effective cross-sector collaboration)*

D14

108 - Evaluating Community Impact within the Settlement Sector (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

While the settlement sector is growing in its understanding of how to assess individual-level impacts of newcomer programs, it is more challenging assessing community-level impact. This is particularly true when evaluating the in-direct activities of Service Provider Organization (SPO's), Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), Umbrellas and others that focus on creating the community conditions for better individual-level outcomes. This panel will cover emerging concepts in the field of evaluation (such as contribution analysis, collective impact, and systems change) that might be helpful in meeting this challenge. It will also feature settlement initiatives that are early adopters in attempting to evaluate community impact.

- **Rich Janzen**, Centre for Community Based Research
- **Lisa Schincariol-McMurtry**, Centre for Community Based Research
- **Meagan Reid**, National LIP Secretariat (NLS)
- **Dan Vandebelt**, Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership

D15

134 - Immigrant Entrepreneurship (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

About 25% of the over one million private-sector businesses in Canada is majority owned by an immigrant. Immigrants account for 32% of all business owners with paid staff in Canada, creating jobs in all sectors of the economy. This session is focused on the immigrant pathway in the ecosystem. Using a gender and intersectional lens, this panel includes macro-level data of immigrant entrepreneurs, their challenges and skills, as well as a case study of a program that supports immigrants to develop entrepreneurial skills and its impact. The session also highlights barriers and enablers in the inclusive innovation ecosystem.

- **Bassrou Gueye**, Statistics Canada
- **Laurene Williams**, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University
- **Mohamed Elmi**, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University

D16

98 - Data and Tech Insights for Canada's Immigration Future: How innovation can accelerate services, capacity, and outcomes (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Canada's immigration priorities are changing rapidly while emerging tech revolutionizes the way we collect and use data. While innovation offers significant promise, harnessing it requires holistic, ethical, and client-centered approaches. This panel brings together leaders working at the intersection of tech, data, and immigration to improve processes, insights, and outcomes. They will explore approaches to bridge tech, social impact, and governance. Examples include novel computational methods for skills and job matching, harnessing preferences and experiences to understand mobility trajectories, using existing data to optimize organisational resources, and funders' expectations for data-driven, people-centered monitoring & evaluation.

- Moderator: **Alice Craft**, The Conference Board of Canada
- **Craig Damian Smith**, Pairity - Co-Founder, VP Policy & Social Impact
- **Abdulla Daoud**, The Refugee Centre - Impact Manager, Northpine Foundation / Executive Director, The Refugee Centre
- **George Carothers**, Institute for Canadian Citizenship - Senior Director, Ideas & Insights

D17

132 - Traditional Practices and Indigenous Well-Being in Canada (Research Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Traditional Practices and Indigenous Well-Being in Canada presents new national evidence on how Indigenous land-based and artistic activities relate to the health and well-being of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit adults. Using 2022 Indigenous Peoples Survey data and survey-weighted logistic regression, the presentation examines how participation in hunting, fishing and trapping, gathering wild plants, making carvings or drawings, and making clothing or footwear is associated with senses of belonging, mental and physical health, substance use, food security, and housing. The presentation highlights both the protective roles of land-based practices—particularly in maintaining cultural continuity and promoting mental health—and how artistic and craft-based activities often occur under conditions of economic precarity. Distinct patterns across Indigenous identity groups, regions, and language ability underscore the need to pair support for cultural and land-based initiatives with policies that address housing, food insecurity, and income inequities.

Session details to be confirmed

- **Dr. Paul Holley**, Research Director, ACS- Metropolis Institute
- **Michele Vitale**, Senior Research Analyst, ACS- Metropolis Institute
- **Hongshu Wang**, Research Associate, ACS- Metropolis Institute

Block E / Bloc E: 1:45 pm – 3: 00 pm

E1

90 - Le Parcours Francophone en Ontario : une approche coordonnée pour accueillir et soutenir les nouveaux arrivants (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (FR)

Cette conférence présentera comment trois fournisseurs de services du secteur de l'établissement en Ontario, le Centre Francophone du Grand Toronto, le Point d'Accueil Francophone et le Collège la Cité à Ottawa coordonnent leurs approches pour accueillir, guider et intégrer les nouveaux arrivants francophones dans leur nouvel environnement. Guidés par l'approche du « par et pour les Francophones », ces acteurs expliqueront en quoi elle participe à la rétention et à l'inclusion des francophones dans leurs communautés.

- **Géraldine Lefebvre**, Collège la Cité

E2

39 - Strengthening Digital Resilience: Insights, Challenges, and Co-Created Solutions (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Led by the National Data Privacy and Cybersecurity Working Group and the Technology Working Group, this roundtable will spark discussion and gather insights on the challenges SPOs face in digital service delivery, cybersecurity, and data privacy. Sharing key findings from their joint survey and facilitating dialogue on current pressures—including resource constraints, and cyber-safety. Participants will explore emerging risks, AI, remote work and discuss how digital capacity and infrastructure must evolve. The session will include a co-creation activity to identify and prioritize the tools, policies, and supports needed to strengthen sector-wide digital transformation and service delivery.

- **Jennifer Freeman**, PeaceGeeks
- **Alicia Couto**, ISANS
- **Traicy Robertson**, Manitoba Possible

E3

130 - What's the Story? Immigration History and the Shifting Canadian Narrative (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This panel explores the evolution of Canada's immigration story—from its historical foundations and shifting policy frameworks to the narratives that have shaped national identity across generations. Panelists will examine whether there is continuity between how immigration was understood and communicated in the past and how it is framed today, amid growing public unease and more polarized debate. The discussion will also look ahead, asking how Canada might tell its immigration story in the future: what elements will endure, what may be reinterpreted, and how a more contested and often negative contemporary narrative could influence public memory and cohesion.

- **Jack Jedwab**, President & CEO, ACS-Metropolis Institute, Montreal, QC

E4

5 - Voices in Action: Cultural Brokering for Inclusive Communities (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

This interactive roundtable explores how Cultural Brokering helps communities navigate Canada's evolving immigration landscape. Participants will examine how Cultural Brokering supports understanding complex identities, promotes inclusion, and combats racism, discrimination, and prejudice. Through dialogue and scenario-based exercises, the session will highlight practical strategies for amplifying voices with lived experience, fostering trust, and strengthening collaboration across regions. Attendees will leave with actionable insights to support equitable outcomes, build community resilience, and ensure that Canada's immigration practices remain people-centred, inclusive, and adaptive to the challenges of today and tomorrow.

- Moderator: **Alexandra Almeida**, National Cultural Brokers Project -Manitoba
- **Sara Torres**, Laurentian University, *Research Finding*
- **Michael Tekeste**, Umbrella Multicultural Health Coop: BC, *Cultural Brokering as a Practice for Change*
- **Lorne Green**, National Cultural Brokers Project: Alberta, *Cultural Brokering: The Road to Reconciliation*

E5

29 - Understanding and Addressing Economic Abuse: Tools, Barriers, and Solutions for Newcomer survivors (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Newcomer survivors of economic abuse often face serious financial barriers that impact their safety and stability. Many experience ID confiscation, coerced debt, damaged credit, or become trapped in cycles of high-cost lending services, making it difficult to leave abusive relationships, access banking, or regain control of their finances. This session focuses on driving awareness of economic abuse while exploring practical, ongoing approaches through survivor-centred tools

and supports. Participants will learn how CCFWE's year-round financial empowerment programs and the STEAR App support newcomers in navigating financial systems, rebuilding confidence, and strengthening economic resilience.

- **Nichola Williams**, Project Manager, Reclaim and Rise, Financial Empowerment Program - Canadian Centre for Women Empowerment, *Reclaim & Rise - a trauma-informed financial literacy program for refugee survivors*
- **Briana Miller**, Coordinator, Gender-Based Violence Prevention Project - YMCA Halifax / Dartmouth Immigrant Services, *Innovative Approaches to Creating Ongoing Gender-Based Violence Prevention Programs for Newcomers*

E6

30 - Case Management Community of Practice and Guideline Development (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Session focuses on the National Case Management Guidelines Project designed to enhance case management capacity. In collaboration with YMCA GTA, it focuses on developing resources for case managers while standardizing promising practices that support the implementation of IRCC new Case Management Framework.

It introduces the project's objectives, methodology, drawing on insights from SPOs across Canada. It highlights themes on assessment practices, trauma-informed approaches, strength-based planning & monitoring strategies. Attendees will gain understanding of how the project shapes sector standards & how Client support service databases improve consistency & knowledge-sharing & its potential to support high-quality case management nationwide.

- **Shamaila Akram**, Centre for Newcomers
- **Teresa Costa**, YMCA of Greater Toronto
- **Evaristo Vocaj**, Centre for Newcomers
- **Gary Wang**, Centre for Newcomers

E7

36 - From Barriers to Belonging: A Story-Driven Exploration of Newcomer Employment and Wellness in Newfoundland and Labrador (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This storytelling-based workshop explores the invisible barriers newcomers face in accessing equitable employment, wellness, and belonging, drawing on frontline experiences from Amal Unite & Empower's province-wide model in Newfoundland and Labrador. Integrating anti-racism work, employer engagement, wellness supports, and community connection, the session shares lived stories, systemic insights, and collaborative strategies shaping newcomer outcomes in low-immigration regions. Participants will hear directly from practitioners leading this work and explore how coordinated, wraparound models can drive stronger labour market inclusion, reduce discrimination, and improve long-term retention nationally.

- **Hillary Bellows**, Amal Unite & Empower
- **Hayley McLellan**, Amal Unite & Empower
- **Renata Lang**, Amal Unite & Empower
- **Laura Aguirre Polo**, Amal Unite & Empower

E8

68 - Creating Pathways for Immigrant Women in STEM in Canada's Nation Building Projects (Practical Workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

Join TGC and presenters from Conference Board of Canada, Purolator Canada, and Canadian Association of Women In Construction to learn about practical tips and strategies around the role the immigrant settlement sector can play to double the number of women and gender diverse individuals in Canada's strategic high growth sectors in the next ten years. Since 70% of director level jobs never get posted, we will discuss how robust and innovative programming to help position in-demand transferable skills can help mid-career women professionals chart employment pathways that go beyond applying to job postings and land good jobs in sectors that build Canada's economic strength in this critical moment in our history.

- Moderator: **Sara Kazi**, TGC.co
- **Saadia Muzaffar**, TGC.co, *Double in Ten: Strategies to double the number of women in infrastructure, logistics, renewable energy, critical minerals, and advanced manufacturing*
- **Lora McMillan**, Canadian Association of Women In Construction, *Breaking Barriers and Building Futures With Women in Construction*
- **Ashley Suszko-Woods**, Purolator Canada, *Driving To Success: Women in Transportation and Logistics*

E9

69 - Clarity in Chaos: The Role of Language Standards in Canada's Immigration Future (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

In this presentation experts from the political, academic, settlement, language training and employment arenas will discuss the importance of language standards in the immigration process and whether they support consensus building in Canada's immigration policy. They will show how the Canadian Language Benchmarks and les Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens are evolving to support changing patterns of immigration and adapting to the increasing use of digital technology. Finally, they will consider Canada's language standards in the global immigration context and whether they could be the key to attracting, supporting and retaining immigrants to, and in, Canada.

- Moderator: **Colette Pépin**, Executive Director, CCLB,

- **Yves Saint-Germain**, Consultant, *The Current Landscape of Changes in Immigration Policy*
- **Carol Derby**, CCLB Consultant, *Modernizing the CLB: Update and What's Next*
- **Dr. Monika Jezak**, CNCLC Consultant, *NCLC Modernization in Francophone Minority Contexts*
- **Anne Senior**, CCLB Specialist Consultant, *Attracting, Supporting, and Retaining New Immigrants in Challenging Times*

E10

85 - Gateway to Impact: Transforming Settlement Support Through Digital Collaboration (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

As immigration policy and service needs evolve, digital transformation has become essential for effective settlement support. Immigrant Services Calgary scaled Gateway from a pilot to a city-wide designated NAARS provider through a structured change management approach. Built on Salesforce, Gateway streamlines client intake, triage, personalized planning, and targeted referrals across 80+ partners. Gateway serves as a collaborative infrastructure enabling real-time tracking of client journeys, enhancing cross-sector coordination, and supporting continuous improvement. This session offers practical insights for leaders managing complex change and demonstrates how aligning people, processes, and purpose can create a sustainable, scalable service model.

- Moderator: **Vibha Kaushik**, Immigrant Services Calgary
- **Noah Mebarak**, Immigrant Services Calgary, 1. *Driving System Change: Gateway's Model for Effective NAARS Delivery*
- **Wissam Shalaby**, Immigrant Services Calgary, 1. *Driving System Change: Gateway's Model for Effective NAARS Delivery*
- **Sameena Arif**, Immigrant Services Calgary, 2. *Partnerships in Action: Enhancing Collaboration for Newcomer Services*
- **Zohaib Ajaz Faridi**, Immigrant Services Calgary, 3. *Turning Data into Action: Continuous Improvement in Practice*
- **Prashant Dhungana**, Immigrant Services Calgary, 3. *Turning Data into Action: Continuous Improvement in Practice*

E11

92 - Let's Talk About Youth Work (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Let's share promising practices, experiences and program ideas for combatting racism, creating harmonious intergroup relations and directing public opinion towards inclusion, celebration and diversity. Since 1992 the YMCA of Greater Halifax Dartmouth has been working in partnership

with schools and in the community to support youth settlement in NS. The YMCA of Greater Toronto supports newcomer youth through leadership and skill-building opportunities, internship programs, and youth employment services. Using a strengths-based approach, immigrant youth are encouraged to recognize their abilities as assets and to celebrate the experiences they bring—contributions that strengthen their pathways into their future. Join YMCA youth leaders!

- Speakers to be announced

E12

106 - The impact of temporary visas on identities and migration (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This panel examines federal and provincial policy responses to the arrival of displaced Ukrainians and explores how temporary status shapes newcomer youths' settlement trajectories. It opens with a presentation analyzing Canada's emergency travel visa policy in the context of the humanitarian migration regime in Canada. The subsequent presentations draw on findings from a longitudinal qualitative study of Ukrainian youth in Nova Scotia and Alberta. Based on two waves of data collection and a 'day-in-the-life' visual method, the study explores how youth navigate displacement while living with temporary status. Findings highlight both challenges and resilience factors, underscoring the need for policies that foster stability and belonging.

- **Moderator: Victor Satzewich**, Department of Sociology, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
- **Lyubov Zhyznomirska**, Department of Political Science and Global Development Studies, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, *Canada's response to forced displacement caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war: Political and Policy Dimensions*
- **Michael Ungar**, Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, *Navigating Temporary Settlement: Promotive and Protective Factors in the Experiences of Ukrainian Youth under CUAET*
- **Oksana Tashkinova**, Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, *Navigating Temporary Settlement: Promotive and Protective Factors in the Experiences of Ukrainian Youth under CUAET*
- **Elizabeth Burgess-Pinto**, Faculty of Nursing, MacEwan University, Edmonton, Alberta, *Gendered Aspects of the Settlement Processes of Ukrainian Youth with Temporary Status in Canada*
- **Jeffrey Stepnisky**, Department of Sociology, MacEwan University, Edmonton, Alberta, *Stability and Hope: Schools as Mediators of Temporariness among Ukrainian Youth*

E13

125 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block

125a - Advancing Intersectional Approaches: Exploring Strategies Centering Youth to Tackle Unemployment and Promote Civic Participation (Educational lecture / Présentation éducative) (EN)

Youth face systemic barriers that contribute to unemployment and limit civic participation. This workshop examines these challenges and explores solutions through labour market insights and community-based practices, highlighting strategies such as trauma-informed engagement, intercultural dialogue, and holistic, youth-centered program design to create lasting impact. Initiatives like EmpowHER and Employability Skills for Youth (ES4Y) empower youth, especially those facing barriers, through education, training, and meaningful work experiences supported by mentorship, career coaching, and financial assistance. The workshop will demonstrate how these initiatives equip youth with the skills and confidence to transition into the labour market

- **Ayesha Bhikha**, Achēv
- **Samantha Iyere**, Achēv
- **Therese Guidolin**, Achēv
- **Kosalina Vignarajah**, Achēv
- **Althea Samuels**, Achēv

125b - From Access to Impact: Reducing Disadvantage in Newcomer Workforce Programs (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Newcomers to Canada face persistent barriers in accessing workforce programs, from language and credential gaps to limited familiarity with sector expectations. This roundtable uses insights from EPIC HC and EVOlve Skills to explore strategies that reduce disadvantage and expand equitable access. Discussion will highlight systemic barriers, inclusive program design, culturally responsive supports, and employer engagement practices that improve outcomes. Participants will gain practical, evidence-informed approaches to strengthening access, employment readiness, and meaningful workforce participation for immigrants and newcomers. These insights aim to inform policy, program planning, and community collaboration across sectors.

- **Shobana Thangavadivel**, Achēv
- **Tanvi Sukhija**, Achēv

E14

96 - Building Bridges: Supporting Newcomer Students in School (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

In the early 2000s, Edmonton Catholic Schools began noticing a significant increase in newcomer students. In response, strategic decisions were made to strengthen supports for these learners and their families. This led to the introduction of divisional initiatives such as Intercultural Liaison Workers, second-language course challenges, expanded language offerings, credited cultural classes, and coordinated partnerships with settlement agencies. A

key milestone in this journey was the creation of One World...One Centre, a dedicated department focused on providing comprehensive support for newcomer students and their families.

- **Moderator: Cheryl Shinkaruk**, Manager, One World...One Centre, Edmonton Catholic Schools
- **Melanie Kidder**, Community Engagement Coordinator, Edmonton Catholic Schools
- **Mai Chi Nguyen**, Intercultural Liaison Worker, Edmonton Catholic Schools
- **Sebastien Djomou**, Intercultural Liaison Worker, Edmonton Catholic Schools
- **Sabelle Gueye**, Directrice du programme TEE PTN et des services aux écoles

E15

112 - Applying the IRCC Case Management Framework: National Best Practices for High-Needs Case Management (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Since IRCC implemented the Case Management framework in April 2025, clients are now identified as low- or high-needs, with high-needs clients facing more persistent and complex barriers such as health issues, trauma, crises, limited support networks, low language skills, and limited life skills and more. These cases require long-term, specialized interventions which may fall outside typical case management interventions. In this session, four case management leaders from SPOs across Canada, spanning large urban centres and small rural communities, will discuss how high-needs cases are identified, outline common challenges and patterns, and share effective practices for supporting complex cases.

- **Moderator: Mehreen Nayani**, Client Support Services, YMCA of Greater Toronto
- **Kara Saarloos**, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
- **Luiz Dutra**, Association for New Canadians
- **Shukri Abdulle**, Reception House, Waterloo Region
- **Reema Malhotra Bhola**, Client Support Services, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

E16

93 - Future-Ready Skills: Building Newcomer Pathways to Employment (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

This workshop highlights innovative ways to upskill new immigrants through Canadian education, volunteer opportunities, and employment pathways. TNO – The Neighbourhood Organization offers several upskilling programs that empower newcomers, enhance professional skills, provide Canadian workplace experience, and improve employability. Through formal education and training from reputable institutions, mentorship, and career support, participants gain confidence, industry knowledge, and practical expertise, enabling a smoother transition into meaningful employment and fostering long-term success in Canada's job market.

- **Corine Hibbert Samuels**, TNO - The Neighbourhood Organization

- **Sandra Morris**, TNO - The Neighbourhood Organization

E17

126 - Reimagining Rural Immigration Pathways Through Municipal–Settlement Agency Collaboration (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

This session examines the transformative potential of municipal–settlement agency collaboration in immigration work. It outlines how shared planning, data coordination, and joint initiatives address service gaps and enhance newcomer outcomes. During the panel discussion, we will hear about tested and tried practices that are proving to be successful, best practices, and initiatives that have already been employed in various regions. The discussion will emphasize the benefits of building cohesive, responsive systems that foster stronger, more inclusive.

- **Moderator: Ricardo Morales**, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)
- **Lisa Tiffin**, City of Brooks
- **Robyn Klassen**, City of Brooks
- **Mohammed Idriss**, Brooks and County Immigration Services (BCIS)/ City of Brooks
- **Lisa Degenstein**, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)

Block F / Bloc F: 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

F1

9 - Interpreter Cultural Awareness Training to Support Newcomer Success (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Newcomers arrive in Canada with hope, optimism, and an immediate need to navigate the pillars of daily living: employment, education, and healthcare, for example. Trained community interpreters can facilitate this navigation by offering assistance as peers with local cultural experience. This workshop will outline how the Communicator online training program develops participants' interpretation, translation, and cultural navigation skills to ensure newcomers' success. Mandatory course work in interpretation fundamentals, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and truth and reconciliation will empower interpreters to negotiate diverse contexts and discussions in their work, enabling them to provide both language and cultural insight for clients.

- **Oleh Kovalchuk**, Ukrainian Canadian Congress - Saskatchewan Provincial Council (UCC-SPC)
- **Aram Mahdavian**, Ukrainian Canadian Congress - Saskatchewan Provincial Council (UCC-SPC)

- **Shauna Tilbury**, Ukrainian Canadian Congress – Saskatchewan Provincial Council (UCC-SPC)

F2

28 - Between Cultures and Care: Rethinking Immigrant Parenting and Family Preservation in Canada (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

As Canada adjusts its immigration and integration priorities, the realities of immigrant parenting have become central to both settlement and child-welfare practice. Immigrant families often navigate competing expectations between cultural identity and Canadian child-rearing norms. Immigrant parents are grieving the loss of their home, culture, and immediate family support, on top of which comes the stress of parenting in a culture and system. When misunderstanding arises, the result can be family stress or child welfare involvement. This session connects child welfare, settlement, and policy perspectives to explore how systems can better support immigrant parents, reduce family conflict, and strengthen belonging.

- **Samuel Mammen**, Oak Hill Ranch
- **Baiju Vareed**, MacEwan University

F3

41 - Implementing Canada's New Case Management Framework: Strengthening Coordination and Responsiveness in Anglophone and Francophone Service Provider Organizations (Practical Workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

This presentation examines how NAARS and Case Management teams coordinate under Canada's new Case Management Framework, drawing on experiences from three IRCC-funded Calgary francophone and anglophone service provider organizations. The session explores communication practices and shared-client navigation, how the referral process functions, and what supports smoother transitions. It also examines obstacles like privacy rules, language barriers, and mismatched systems. By laying out both the strengths and the pressure points, the session offers practical guidance for more consistent, client centered referrals and collaboration.

- **Liana Kalognomou**, La Cité des Rocheuses, *Francophone & Anglophone Service Provider Organizations – A Collaboration in Action*
- **Wissam Shalaby**, Immigrant Services Calgary, *Leveraging Standardized Referral Framework for Integrated Client Support*
- **Hannah Olusoga-Tinubi**, Centre for Newcomers, *From Framework to Practice: Lessons Learned in Collaborative Case Management*

F4

13 - Reducing Barriers for IEHPs – Sustainable employment opportunities and addressing labour market shortages (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Employment Pathways in Canada - Health Careers (EPIC-HC) is a pilot research project that supports internationally educated nurses, pharmacists, and laboratory technicians in finding healthcare-related employment and developing a career pathway while completing the accreditation and licensing process in Canada. In this presentation, Achēv will provide an overview of the program, including a demonstration of its participant progress, and other key program priorities that have helped IEHPs make informed decisions about the career pathway. SRDC will present early evaluation findings, including an in-depth analysis of how EPIC-HC has helped clients find relevant employment and relocate within Canada.

- **Anita Samuels**, Career and Newcomer Services, *EPIC-HC Program overview*
- **Kim Lehrer**, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), *Evaluating EPIC-HC: Early Findings*
- **Sol Park**, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), *On the Move: Relocating as Part of EPIC-HC*

F5

51 - Charting a New Course for Child Welfare: Integrating Immigration, Equity, and Innovation Across Provinces (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Child welfare increasingly intersects with immigration and settlement, yet gaps persist. This roundtable showcases how the CWICE National Outreach Project is equipping provinces to better support refugees, newcomer children, youth, and families. Learn how refugee/immigration-responsive tools, national training, and cross-sector partnerships are changing outcomes for families across Canada.

- Moderator: **Nadia Drepaul**, Peel CAS' CWICE Manager
- **Mary Beth Moellenkamp**, CEO Peel Children's Aid Society
- **Jennifer Fallis**, General Child and Family Service Authority, Manitoba
- **Scott Clarke**, Child Safety and Family Preservation, Department of Opportunities and Social Development, Nova Scotia
- **Bayan Khatib**, Impact Director, Northpine Foundation

F6

76 - Countering DEIA Pushback: Protecting Talent Pathways for Newcomers and Other Equity-Deserving Groups in Canadian Workplaces (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This session explores pathways to employment inclusion for newcomers and equity-deserving groups, featuring panelists from Toronto, Halifax and Calgary with experience engaging 700+ employers nationwide. The discussion will focus on barriers and solutions to meaningful employment for immigrants and refugees, particularly in light of reduced immigration level plans and rising anti-immigrant sentiments. Panelists will examine the complex identities shaping newcomer experiences with employment support, access, and inclusion. The session highlights the impact of reduced immigration on employers, talent supply and demand, and identifies key challenges facing hiring managers today—and strategies to prepare for the year ahead.

- **Moderator: Anne-Marie Pham**, Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
- **Dominique Roche**, Sr Consultant and Executive Recruiter, Royer Thompson, *Barriers to Newcomer Talent Attraction and Retention*
- **Karen Mutyabule**, Director of Equity and Community Supports, University of King's College, *Aligning equity in the workplace and community supports*
- **Sartaj Sarkaria**, CEO of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, *Navigating Change: Employment Inclusion, Policy Shifts, and Impact*
- **Orlando Tovar**, Co-Executive Director, Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia, *Employment challenges and community pathways for LGBTQI+ refugees*

F7

77 - From Crisis to Contraction: Linking International Students Experience of COVID-19 to Canada's Post Pandemic Reductions in Temporary Migration. (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Utilizing quantitative data, this SSHRC funded research project examines how international students' experience during the COVID-19 pandemic intersects with Canada's post-pandemic immigration policy to reduce temporary migration. The pandemic revealed deep vulnerabilities in students' academic, financial, and social well-being, exposing gaps in support systems and the strains placed on housing and public services. These pressures have since informed national debates about reducing study-permit targets. This presentation analyzes how pandemic-era realities shaped policy decisions, which have implications for Canada's global reputation as a desirable study destination.

- **Moderator: Prof. Joseph Mensah**, York University
- **David Firang**, P.I, Professor, Trent University, *How COVID-19 Experiences of International Students Shaped Canada's Move to Reduce Temporary Migration; After COVID-19: Reassessing International Student Mobility in Light of Canada's Reduced Temporary Migrant Target*
- **Samuel Owusu Okyere**, Graduate Student, *How COVID-19 Experiences of International Students Shaped Canada's Move to Reduce Temporary Migration*

- **Patricia Samson**, Professor, University of Calgary, *How COVID-19 Experiences of International Students Shaped Canada's Move to Reduce Temporary Migration*
- **Mohammed Abdulai**, PhD Student
- **Anthony Mensah**, Ph.D Student, *After COVID-19: Reassessing International Student Mobility in Light of Canada's Reduced Temporary Migrant Targets*
- **Bharati Sethi**, Professor, Co-Applicant, *After COVID-19: Reassessing International Student Mobility in Light of Canada's Reduced Temporary Migrant Targets*

F8

111 - Testing the Edges of AI: A Sector-Led Workshop for Responsible Innovation

(Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

As IRCC considers a Digital Refresh, this roundtable invites participants to actively explore the opportunities, risks, and practical challenges of integrating AI into newcomer employment and settlement services. Through a collaborative workshop format, attendees will examine what ethical, human-centered, and collectively designed AI should look like in practice—and how responsible innovation can strengthen outcomes for both organizations and newcomers. WelcomeCoach.ca, an AI-enabled workforce development platform created by PeaceGeeks with SPO partners and studied by Toronto Metropolitan University's Bridging Divides researchers, will serve as the case example to surface real-world considerations and guide shared learning.

- Moderator: **Jennifer Freeman**, PeaceGeeks
- **Ladi Onasanya**, PeaceGeeks
- **Rupa Bannerjee**, TMU

F9

109 - One NSAT, One Pathway: Settlement Without Duplication (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Options and ISSofBC are building a seamless settlement pathway for Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs). With the new Case Management (CM) Framework and single National Standardized Assessment Template (NSAT) requirement, coordination among IRCC-funded services is essential. NSAT implementation successes and challenges will be shared, including ISSofBC's Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) NAARS for GARs, Options' CM Navigation Assistant & centralized intake team for Needs and Assets Assessments and Referral Services (NAARS). Presenters will outline referral flows amongst RAP, CM, Information and Orientation, and partner organizations. Participants will leave with practical lessons on scaling coordinated intake and reducing duplication.

- Moderator: **Jenny Lam**, Options Community Services Society

- **Jennifer York**, Immigrant Services Society of BC
- **Anas Najim**, Options Community Services Society
- **Gurrinder Roy**, Options Community Services Society

F10

113 - East–West Lessons: Building Protective Supports for Newcomer Youth in Halifax and Calgary (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

Calgary's rapid influx of newcomer youth is intensifying pressures—limited language supports, overstretched school capacity, and fragmented services—fueling a rise in youth exposure to risky and violent environments. Halifax is now facing similar strains as arrivals steadily rise. This session compares how both cities are approaching critical turning points and why coordinated, early supports are essential for safety and long-term integration. By sharing practical, solution-focused approaches from both coasts, we highlight actionable strategies that strengthen protective factors, stabilize settlement pathways, and help communities respond proactively to the needs of newcomer youth.

- **Noel Bahliby**, Director, Youth Services, Centre for Newcomers
- **Laura Callaghan**, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Newcomer Mental Health, IWK Hospital, Nova Scotia Health

F11

116 - Sérinitii Project: Simplifying the path for immigrants to skilled trades in order to strengthen the capacities of employability and entrepreneurship stakeholders (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (BIL)

From Express Entry eligibility criteria to integration into Skilled Trades in Ontario, the path can be complex for immigrants. The Sérinitii project aims to simplify this journey by making documentation related to prior learning assessment, apprenticeship, and certification more accessible while raising awareness. In the long term, it intends to replicate to better support both employability and entrepreneurship service providers in relation to the occupations listed in the National Occupational Classification.

Projet Sérinitii : Simplifier le parcours des immigrants vers les métiers spécialisés en vue de renforcer les capacités des intervenants en employabilité et en entrepreneuriat (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (BIL)

Des critères d'admissibilité d'Entrée express à l'intégration des métiers spécialisés en Ontario, le cheminement peut s'avérer complexe pour les immigrants. Le projet Sérinitii vise à simplifier ce parcours en vulgarisant la documentation relative à la reconnaissance des acquis, l'apprentissage et l'accréditation tout en sensibilisant. À long terme, il compte répliquer afin d'appuyer tout aussi bien les fournisseurs de services en employabilité et entrepreneuriat quant aux métiers de la Classification Nationale des Professions.

- **Mikhaela Sullivan**, Réseau en Immigration Francophone du Centre Sud Ouest de l'Ontario

F12

117 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block

117a - Building Bridges: International and Refugee Student Integration at Canadian Universities (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

I will be presenting my research on the integration of international and refugee students into Canadian universities. This study examines five key areas of discourse: the meaning of integration, societal mindsets toward newcomers, international student experiences, refugee student experiences, and student engagement. The primary focus is to explore how effective integration practices can create mutually beneficial outcomes for both international and refugee students. Additionally, the research aims to identify and analyze the distinct needs and challenges faced by each student group. By understanding these factors, institutions can develop more inclusive strategies to enhance student success and foster a supportive academic environment.

- **Behnoush Shafiei Sararoodi**, Ontario Tech University

117b - Reflective Global Leadership: Building Humanized, Inclusive, and Culturally-Aware Spaces for International Students and Businesses to Thrive (Workshop / Atelier) (EN)

As Canada reimagines its immigration future, reflective leadership offers a pathway to building more humanized, inclusive, and culturally aware communities. This interactive workshop explores how reflective practice can strengthen global leadership capacity in education, business, and policy. Drawing on Dr. Mary Grogan's 7 Cs of Global Leadership framework, participants will engage in dialogue, guided reflection, and collaborative problem-solving to identify barriers and design strategies that help international students and global businesses thrive. The session empowers participants to "change course" by leading with empathy, curiosity, and compassion—creating spaces where diversity and belonging fuel innovation and shared growth.

- **Mary Grogan**, EdD, MG Education Consulting & P/T professor George Brown College

F13

25 - Bending the Invisible Lines: An Inside Job for Healthy Collaborations

(Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

This session explores the tensions, lessons, and opportunities within university–community collaboration—an approach that becomes especially vital during periods of significant funding and policy change. Drawing on the UBC–AMSSA partnership, presenters show how shared roles and collective processes can challenge structural barriers while also exposing internal dynamics that impede progress. By examining the often-invisible organizational forces that shape decisions and relationships, the session highlights the need for intentional, collaborative strategies that elevate collective wisdom. Interactive activities will support participants in reflecting on how to navigate these complexities within their own contexts.

- **Daljit Gill-Badesha**, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC
- **Javier Ojer**, University of British Columbia

F14

32 - Intersectional Barriers to Settlement Access: Evidence from Racialized Newcomer Communities(Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

The Brokers Build Bridges model is co-developed with Community Leadership Teams (CLT), natural supports, EthnoCultural Communities, brokers, and community surveys. Community Leadership Teams identify the barriers newcomers face and guide system changes to enhance service delivery. This workshop demonstrates how governance structures, reflection cycles, and collaborative design create equitable, culturally grounded, and responsive institutional practices.

- **Majo Rueda-Garcia**, ActionDignity - Project Coordinator, *Building Community Power Through the BBB Model: Systems Change Through CLTs, Reflection, and Natural Supports*

F15

43 - Reconciliation is good until I get smoke on my clothes- “Bridging Worlds, Embracing Realities (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Join us for a dynamic session exploring reconciliation in action—through policy and community initiatives. Discover how MANSO partnered with Indigenous Elders to create the Guiding Principles Framework for Indigenous and Newcomer Engagement. Hear the stories from René Deleurme Centre staff about their Starblanket project to commemorate residential school survivors and the children who never returned home. This meaningful initiative united newcomers and Indigenous communities, weaving shared traditions into a symbol of healing and respect. Learn how these efforts are shaping inclusive practices, strengthening partnerships, and building bridges across cultures for a stronger, more connected Manitoba.

- **Misty Belcourt**, René Deleurme Centre - Louis Riel School Division
- **Yana Zheleva**, René Deleurme Centre - Louis Riel School Division
- **Don Boddy**, MANSO

F16**122 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block****122a - Entrepreneurship as Integration: A Roundtable on Supporting Immigrant Women's Economic Futures in Canada (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)**

Entrepreneurship is a powerful pathway to economic integration, resilience, and belonging for immigrant women and gender-diverse newcomers in Canada. This interactive roundtable, facilitated by YWCA Metro Vancouver, invites participants into an open dialogue about the evolving landscape of newcomer entrepreneurship—exploring systemic barriers, digital innovation, policy gaps, and the essential role of social purpose organizations. Participants will engage in a dynamic, inclusive conversation designed to strengthen supports, foster collaboration, and reimagine how entrepreneurship can help shape Canada's future.

- **Rochelle Rezansoff**, Senior Program Manager, YMCA Metro Vancouver

122b - Cross-Sector Collaboration to Improve Employment and Mental Health Outcomes for Newcomer Women Impacted by GBV (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Newcomer women facing trauma, mental-health stressors, and safety challenges often navigate employment systems not equipped to meet their complex needs. Challenges such as precarious immigration status, discriminatory hiring practices, and safety-related disruptions disproportionately shape labour market outcomes for survivors. This workshop draws on OCASI initiatives working across employment, mental health, and GBV to demonstrate why these issues must be addressed collaboratively rather than through siloed service delivery. Presenters will share coordinated strategies that support newcomer women survivors' economic empowerment through cross-sector program design and approaches that strengthen mental health while reducing systemic barriers.

- **Berivan Kutlay Sarikaya**, OCASI
- **Caley Cross**, OCASI
- **Tarana Sultan**, OCASI

F17**14 - Engaging the Public: Building Social License for Immigration Through Community Dialogue (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)**

In a moment of political uncertainty around immigration, community engagement is essential for fostering understanding and inclusion. This roundtable explores how AAISA and partners use engagement to counter misinformation and build social license for immigration. We will share

examples of community dialogues, storytelling initiatives, and media collaborations that spark informed public conversations about migration's role in Alberta's prosperity. Through case studies and participant discussion, we'll consider how service providers can move beyond service delivery to become conveners of intercultural dialogue, strengthening public knowledge and sector credibility.

- **Chloé McBean**, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)
- **Abu Yandiev**, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)
- **Andrew Lam**, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)

Friday, March 13th, 2026 / Vendredi 13 mars 2026

Registration / inscriptions: as of / dès 7:30 am

Presentation of the Metropolis awards of Excellence / Remise des Prix d'excellence Metropolis: 9:00 - 9:15

Plenary Session 3 / Séance plénière 3: 9:00 am – 10:30 am

Policy Makers and the Sector: The State of the Dialogue on Immigration in Canada

A key pillar in the success of the immigration system in Canada is the state of cooperation between policy makers and immigrant service providers. To that end, it is critical to understand priorities and perspectives that inform decision-making. Speakers in this plenary will look at how the relationship has evolved over time and how best to collaborate to meet the challenges around immigration and integration going forward with a focus on selection, language training, foreign credential recognition and the holy grail – securing permanent employment.

Session Chair: **Paula Knight**, CEO, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and Chair of the Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARAISA), Conference Co-Chair

- **Catherine Scott**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Settlement and Citizens, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- **Shamira Madhany**, Managing Director and Deputy Executive Director, World Education Services (WES)
- **Myriam Mekni**, CEO, Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI Ottawa)
- **Anita Stellinga**, CEO, COSTI Immigrant Services

Les décideurs politiques et le secteur : l'état du dialogue sur l'immigration au Canada

Un pilier essentiel du succès du système d'immigration au Canada réside dans le niveau de coopération entre les décideurs politiques et les organismes de services aux immigrants. À cet égard, il est crucial de comprendre les priorités et les perspectives qui orientent la prise de décision. Les conférenciers de cette séance plénière examineront l'évolution de cette relation au fil du temps et les meilleures façons de collaborer afin de relever les défis liés à l'immigration

et à l'intégration à l'avenir, en mettant l'accent sur la sélection, la formation linguistique, la reconnaissance des diplômes et des compétences acquis à l'étranger et l'objectif ultime : l'accès à un emploi permanent.

Présidence : Paula Knight, Directrice générale, l'Association des services aux immigrants de la Nouvelle-Écosse (ISANS) et présidente de l'Association des agences au service des immigrants de la région atlantique (ARISA), co-présidente du congrès

- **Catherine Scott**, Sous-ministre adjointe, Établissement et citoyens, à Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada (IRCC)
- **Shamira Madhany**, Directrice générale Canada et Directrice exécutive adjointe, *World Education Services (WES)*
- **Myriam Mekni**, Directrice générale, *Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI Ottawa)*
- **Anita Stellinga**, Directrice générale, COSTI, Toronto

Block G / Bloc G: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

G1

16 - Enhancing the resilience of immigrant women at risk of or experiencing gender-based violence (GBV) in rural communities (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Immigrant Migrant Women's Association of Halifax, in collaboration with Second Story Women's Center and researcher Dr. Gianisa Adisaputri, invite to an open, collaborative discussion on strategies enhancing the resilience of immigrant women at risk of or experiencing gender-based violence (GBV) in rural communities. Panellists and conference participants will explore themes of rural resilience, healthcare access, and service provision, drawing from research results and community initiatives such as IMWAH's Circle of Women program. The session aims to create a space for sharing experiences and strategies for outreach and support of immigrant women in rural communities, fostering dialogue between academe, practice, and lived experience.

- Moderator: **Olya Stepanenko**, IMWAH
- **Olya Stepanenko**, IMWAH
- **Gianisa Adisaputri**, Dalhousie University
- **Aliyyah Fazil**, Second Story Women's Center
- **Dr. Alexa Yakubovich**, Dalhousie University

G2

37 - Cross-Sector Insights into the Settlement Experiences of Newcomer Children and Youth in Canada (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

Newcomer children and youth navigate complex social, educational, and emotional landscapes as they settle in Canada, yet their experiences are often viewed through a single disciplinary lens. This workshop brings together scholars and practitioners from education, social work, health, and community organizations to examine the interconnected realities shaping their lives. Through interdisciplinary dialogue, we will explore cultural and relational factors influencing wellbeing, belonging, and opportunities for success. Presenters will share research, program innovations, and community-based approaches that highlight both challenges and strengths, offering collaborative strategies to better support newcomer young people.

- **Jessie-Lee McIsaac**, Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre at Mount Saint Vincent University
- **Nahal Fakhari**, Mount Saint Vincent University, *Mapping the Experiences of Immigrant Educators in Early Childhood and School Settings in Canada and beyond*
- **Gina Moynan**, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), *Families of Resilience: Navigating a New World*
- **Catherine Bryan**, Dalhousie University, *Newcomers to Old Systems: Immigrant Social Workers and Nova Scotia's Child Protection Regime*
- **Yolande Pottie-Sherman**, Memorial University of Newfoundland, *Why a Mobility Justice Approach Is Needed in Canada's Early Learning and Child Care Workforce?*

G3

114 - Comprendre et réduire les barrières au service TÉE (Roundtable / Table ronde) (FR)

Cette table ronde portera sur les obstacles qui limitent l'accès aux services pour les élèves nouvellement arrivés et leurs parents, notamment la disparité en matière de ressources, d'outils, de pratiques et de disponibilité des services TÉE. Les participant·e·s seront invité·e·s à partager leurs expériences et à échanger sur les défis rencontrés dans l'accompagnement de ces jeunes et de leurs familles. L'objectif est d'élaborer collectivement des pistes de solutions afin de contribuer aux travaux du Réseau National TÉE et de contribuer à la mise en place de conditions favorables à l'intégration et à l'inclusion éducative des personnes ayant un TÉE.

- **Sabelle Gueye**, Directrice du programme TEE PTN et des services aux écoles, Francophonie Canadienne Plurielle (FRAP)
- **Lynda Kahlouche**, Coordination régionale de l'initiative TÉE -Région EST, District scolaire francophone Sud
- **Ngena Ali-Ebenga**, Directeur de la Coordination nationale des TÉE, Francophonie Canadienne Plurielle (FRAP)
- **Amira Khedhri**, Directrice du développement stratégique, District scolaire francophone Sud

G4

70 - From Selection to Integration: Building a Renewed Immigration Vision for Canada (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This workshop will convene a multi-sector panel to explore the need for a renewed long-term vision for immigration in Canada. It will examine persistent gaps between newcomer selection and integration, and propose forward-looking solutions to the systemic barriers that prevent newcomers from contributing at their full capacity. Drawing on insights from WES' recent national roundtables, as well as perspectives from the employment and settlement sectors, the panel will outline principles for a coherent and coordinated system guided by clear strategic goals and measurable outcomes that can respond to current pressures while supporting both Canada's long-term prosperity and the well-being of newcomer.

- **Pedro Malm Green**, WES, *Towards a Long-Term Vision for Immigration in Canada*
- **Rana Sleem**, CARE Centre for IENs, *From Selection to Early Integration: Information, Pathways, and Barriers*
- **Francesco Calazzo**, Southeast New Brunswick Regional Service Commission, *From Integration to Utilization: Employer Perspectives on System Gaps*

G5

66 - Direct Impact of Indirect Services: Examining the impact of umbrella organizations in service delivery (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Provincial and regional umbrella organizations provide indirect support to the settlement and integration ecosystem. It is an important time to understand how the work of research, training and development, policy advocacy and bridging government-sector voice complements and is foundational to successful direct service delivery, especially with current and anticipated changes in the funding and staffing landscape across Canada. Learn from case studies about the importance and impact of umbrella organizations across Canada.

- **Kathryn Friesen**, AAISA
- **Debbie Douglas**, OCASI
- **Carolyn Whiteway**, ARAISA
- **Daljit Gill-Badesha**, AMSSA
- **Innocent Menega**, SAISIA

G6

52 - The National GBV Strategy for Agencies Serving Immigrants: Development, Impact, and Lessons Learned (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) impacts all communities, yet systemic factors such as migration stress, racism, and language barriers heighten risks for newcomers, immigrants, and refugees. This workshop will present the journey of the National GBV Strategy for Agencies Serving Immigrants project, a cross-sector initiative launched in 2019 to strengthen collaboration between the anti-violence and settlement sectors. We will highlight how the project has been building staff capacity, developing a common base of knowledge, and creating practical tools to support safer, inclusive, and more responsive services for clients facing GBV. Aligned with Theme 1, the workshop brings both anti-violence and settlement perspectives.

- **Moderator: Kathryn Bates-Khan**, YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth
- **Anne Oserin-Pinnock**, Elmwood Community Resource Centre, Winnipeg, MB, *Development of the National GBV Strategy for Agencies Serving Immigrants*
- **Briana Miller**, YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth, *The National GBV Strategy for Agencies Serving Immigrants*
- **Maggie To**, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, *Capacity Building of Service Providers*
- **Valérie Auger-Voyer**, Ending Sexual Violence Association of Canada, *Collaboration Between Anti-Violence and Immigrants Serving Sectors*
- **Pinash Akter**, YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth, *Impacts and Lesson Learned*

G7

104 - Building Evaluation Capacity and Coordination in Canada's Settlement Sector (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

Evaluation is vital for improving newcomer outcomes, yet fragmented efforts and limited capacity hinder sector-wide learning. This session explores how building evaluation capacity and fostering coordination can strengthen evidence-based decision-making. Presenters will share insights from national initiatives that advance evaluation practices, highlight strategies for collaboration, and reflect on opportunities for greater alignment across organizations and stakeholders. Attendees will gain practical ideas for enhancing consistency, comparability, and shared accountability—key steps toward a more coordinated approach that supports continuous improvement in the settlement sector.

- **Carol Derby**, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, *From Barriers to Better Data: How National Initiatives Are Strengthening Evaluation Capacity for SPOs*
- **Margerit Roger**, Eupraxia Training, *Reflections and lessons learned from training settlement sector organizations*
- **Rich Janzen**, Centre for Community Based Research, *A national evaluation hub for community-based evaluation: eval4settlement.ca*
- **Kim Lehrer**, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, *Learning by doing – Supporting settlement sector organizations in building capacity through evaluation*

- **Rinila Haridas**, YMCA of the National Capital Region, *IMPRESS: Strengthening Settlement Services Through Evidence and Evaluation in Canada*

G8

42 - Employer Navigator - Strengthening Employer Capacity to Unlock Immigrant Talent (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

This workshop will share findings and lessons from a cross-Canada pilot of the Employer Navigator, a hybrid service designed to support employers in recruiting, onboarding, and retaining immigrant talent. A joint initiative of WES and the Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia, the Employer Navigator pairs a custom-built digital platform with concierge-style support offered by employment engagement specialists. The session will share early outcomes and practical tools that empower employers to efficiently hire immigrants and contribute to equitable workforce integration. Participants will discover the model's potential to unlock immigrant talent and strengthen employer capacity in Canada's evolving immigration landscape.

- **Rania Younes**, IEC-BC, *A Novel Approach to Employer Engagement*
- **Jessie Castello**, WES, *Community Co-Design and Implementation*
- **Brindha Ganesan**, IEC-BC, *Employer Engagement in BC: Reflections from the IECBC Navigator Team*

G9

100 - Twenty five years of immigration in Atlantic Provinces (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Immigration has become important for smaller provinces, such as the Atlantic provinces, where population is aging at a faster rate. Any population growth in the region since the mid-1990s has been due to positive international migration, and this was often slight as new arrivals left for other parts of Canada. This changed since about 2016, as population increased markedly. Natural increase is still negative, but there was a much better record of net migration, both international and interprovincial. Recent caps on immigration make it important to analyze how immigrants have performed in labour markets and what has been their impact on economic growth. We also analyze inflows of international students - potential skilled labour pool.

- **Tony Fang**, Memorial University of Newfoundland, *Immigration in Newfoundland & Labrador*
- **Wimal Rankaduwa**, University of Prince Edward Island, *Immigration in Newfoundland & Labrador*
- **Nicholas Manuel**, Saint Mary's University, *Immigration in Newfoundland & Labrador*
- **Ather Akbari**, Saint Mary's University, *Immigration in Newfoundland & Labrador*

G10

101 - Digital by Default, Equity by Design: Scalable Information Delivery for Newcomers in a Changing Landscape (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

As immigration patterns and services vary across regions, equitable outcomes increasingly depend on newcomers accessing reliable, timely information in the language and format that works for them. This session highlights a multilingual, multi-format digital ecosystem as essential infrastructure that can reduce misinformation, shorten support time, and improve readiness through every stage of decision-making. We demonstrate how digital delivery can support newcomers throughout their entire journey: from the moment someone considers immigrating to Canada, through pre-arrival, arrival, and long-term settlement. Orientation to Ontario will be presented as a best-practice model, shared in partnership with TBMA and CCI.

- **Ruchika Singh**, COSTI
- **Cathy Woodbeck**, TBMA
- **Sofiane Maghrebi**, CCI

G11

105 - Optimizing Newcomer Success: An Integrated Model for Settlement and Employment Services (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Effective newcomer integration is often hindered by siloed service delivery. This proposal presents the need for stronger strategic and operational alignment between settlement and employment teams, both within organizations and across the national service ecosystem. We will introduce a proven, data-driven framework enabling seamless referrals, shared case management, and coordinated planning across agencies. This integrated model moves to accelerate economic integration and strengthen long-term outcomes for newcomers. Designed for nationwide scalability, the framework offers adaptable best practices that enhance cross-organizational collaboration, improve NAARS consistency, and create a more coherent, client-centered system of support.

- Moderator: **Mohamed Bagha**, Saint John Newcomers Centre
- **Tavia Han**, Saint John Newcomers Centre
- **Lina Gharbiya**, Saint John Newcomers Centre

G12

118 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block

118a - Intersectionality at Work: LGBTQIA+ Inclusion through YWCA Metro Vancouver's Believe Program (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

The Believe program is an innovative initiative designed to empower LGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse newcomers to Canada. Through customized workshops, career exploration, and trauma-informed support, Believe addresses the unique barriers participants face in navigating the Canadian job market. This session explores how intersectional identities, such as gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, and language, shape employment experiences and outcomes. Presenters will share insights from program delivery, including strategies for gender disclosure and self-advocacy. Participants will engage in dialogue about inclusive hiring practices and learn how community partnerships and employer engagement can foster safer, more equitable workplace

- **Souvik Ray**, YMCA Metro Vancouver

118b - Understanding Complex Identities and Promoting Inclusion (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This presentation explores how fostering intercultural understanding and celebrating complex identities can strengthen relationships and promote inclusion in diverse communities. Focusing on newcomer adjustment, it highlights programs that build resilience, reduce barriers, and create safe spaces for participants to share experiences, develop social connections, and learn from one another. Through discussions and creative theatre-based activities, newcomers engage in storytelling, goal setting, cultural adaptation, and community involvement. These approaches promote harmonious intergroup relations, combat discrimination, and support community capacity building while nurturing intergenerational bonds.

- Moderator: **Najma Wadi**, Resilia
- **Aireen Miaral**, Resilia, *Create Program*
- **Hermína Tipán**, Resilia, *Strengthening Relationships, Celebrating Cultural Diversity And Fostering Intercultural Understanding*

G13

45 - Building Responsive Programs for Underserved Populations in Their Communities (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

This workshop discusses how the Centre for Newcomers assists underserved seniors, children, and families through its Community-Based LINC for Seniors with Digital ESL support program, the Community-Based Child-Care for Newcomers (CBCNC), and a long-standing daycare partnership. Presenters share collaborative approaches to reducing barriers, identifying community needs, and building inclusive programs for diverse communities.

- **Man (Mandy) Xu**, Centre for Newcomers
- **Zi Ye**, Centre for Newcomers

G14

40 - The Vancouver Local Immigration Partnership Gender Network Model (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

VLIP Gender Network initiative integrates Gender-Based Analysis Plus into the work of the Vancouver Local Immigration Partnership to foster meaningful newcomer integration and create lasting impact. What began as a pioneering effort has grown into a dynamic network committed to raising awareness, sharing knowledge, exploring collaborative solutions, and centering intersectionality.

- **Koyali Burman**, Vancouver Local Immigration Partnership

G15

91 - Women in Skilled Trades: Newcomer Integration as an Economic Imperative (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Skills for Change's Women in Skilled Trades (WiST) initiative reveals how immigration, representation, and workforce development intersect to shape Canada's economic outlook. Drawing on national survey data and community-based research, WiST highlights strong interest among newcomer and racialized women in trades careers, while identifying systemic barriers in recruitment, retention, and advancement. Through convenings and partnerships across five provinces, WiST has helped employers build capacity to integrate newcomer talent—offering mentorship, leadership pathways, and tailored supports. Anecdotal examples from coast to coast demonstrate that when skilled trades employers engage newcomer women, the result is a more inclusive economy.

- **Sampada Kukade**, Skills for Change
- **Shawn Newman**, Skills for Change

G16

135 - Media discourse (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This panel is focused on topics related to media-constructed immigrant crisis and stereotypes. By framing immigration as a threat on topics of border crossings, housing shortages, or crime, media narratives have created fear, particularly affecting racialized immigrant communities. Such narratives on both mass media and social media not only distort reality but also deepen systemic racism, creating barriers to inclusion and equitable treatment for newcomers in Canada. This session will also discuss how media discourses shape the conversation on

inclusion and equity, leading to the polarization in support and opposition and shifting attitudes in immigration.

- **Wendy Cukier**, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University
- **Eddy Ng**, Queen's University

Block H / Bloc H: 1:45 pm – 3:00 pm

H1

86 - Renforcer les partenariats pour soutenir les familles nouvellement arrivées / Enhancing Partnerships to Support Newcomer Families (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (FR)

"Les TÉE et SWIS fournissent un soutien essentiel à l'établissement des enfants nouvellement arrivés et à leurs familles dans les écoles anglophones et francophones. Cet atelier explorera les moyens d'améliorer les relations entre les SWIS, les TÉE et les autres parties prenantes impliquées dans l'initiative afin d'améliorer la prestation des services et la collaboration. SWIS and TÉE provide critical settlement support to newcomer children and their families in anglophone and francophone schools. This workshop will explore ways of enhancing relationships between SWIS, TÉE, and other stakeholders involved in the initiative to improve service delivery and collaboration."

- **Lynda Kahlouche**, District scolaire francophone Sud (DSFS)
- **Amira Khedhri**, District scolaire francophone Sud (DSFS)
- **Olivia Finnamore**, Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARISA)

H2

21 - Stalled Futures: How Canada's Immigration Multi-Year Levels Plan Limits Generational Mobility for International Students (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

South Asian international students often arrive to Canada expecting education to lead to permanent residency and stability, yet many remain trapped in long periods of temporary status due to restrictive immigration pathways as per the Immigration Multi-Year Levels. This precarity limits access to stable work, settlement support, and long-term integration. PCHS Calgary has seen rising demand for mental health, housing, employment, and immigration support among students and PGWP holders facing uncertain futures. This presentation uses policy analysis, community data, and lived experience to show how current planning structures create socioeconomic stagnation and to outline reforms for fair, sustainable pathways to settlement and belonging.

- **Harmeet Sandhu**, PCHS Calgary

H3

133 - Understanding and Applying the Canadian Index for Measuring Integration and Inclusion (CIMII)

Understanding and Applying the Canadian Index for Measuring Integration and Inclusion (CIMII) is a practical workshop introducing participants to CIMII, a national data-driven tool that tracks immigrant parity with the Canadian-born population across economic, social, civic, and health dimensions. The session provides an overview of CIMII's methodology and indicators and demonstrates how settlement workers, researchers, and policymakers can leverage the tool to inform program development, service delivery, and integration policies. Participants will also receive a guided demonstration of the CIMII online platform (integrationindex.ca), including the introduction of the new CIMII wage simulator using recent 2025 Labour Force Survey data, and learn how to explore provincial and city-level rankings, apply filters, compare trends over time, and generate insights relevant to their region and organizational work. Presented by Paul Holley, Michele Vitale, and Hongshu Wang (Association for Canadian Studies & Metropolis Institute).

- **Dr. Paul Holley**, Research Director, ACS- Metropolis Institute
- **Michele Vitale**, Senior Research Analyst, ACS- Metropolis Institute
- **Hongshu Wang**, Research Associate, ACS- Metropolis Institute

H4

53 - EDI in Theory and Practice: A Structural Response to Systemic Issues (Practical Workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

This session explores how settlement service providers can apply equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in a way that bridges theory and practice. When informed by data and research, EDI has the potential to address deeply embedded systemic issues in Canadian society. This approach means viewing EDI as a multi-dimensional process that acts on multiple domains, applies diverse perspectives, and critically examines social values. Drawing on insights from non-profit management, human resources, higher education, and grassroots community engagement, presenters will develop an EDI framework while also sharing practical tips.

- **Moderator: Jason Chalmers**, ARAISA
- **Foroogh Mohammadi**, Acadia University, *"Re-imaging EDI: Mentorship, Advocacy, and Structural Change in Higher Education"*
- **Juan Carlos Lopez**, Acadia University, *"Re-imaging EDI: Mentorship, Advocacy, and Structural Change in Higher Education"*
- **Danai Bélanger**, Bishop's University, *"Re-imaging EDI: Mentorship, Advocacy, and Structural Change in Higher Education"*
- **Gül Çalışkan**, St. Thomas University, *"Building Belonging Together: Community Insights for Immigration Policy"*

- **Michaël Séguin**, Saint Paul University, *“Moving Inclusion Beyond Lip Service and Tokenism”*
- **Reenat Akhter**, ARAISA (Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies), *“Real World Applications of IDEA”*

H5

88 - Strategies for Success – Overcoming Healthcare Communication and Licensure Barriers (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Discover how these presenters are working together to support Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals (IEHPs) across Canada, offering innovative programs that tackle credential recognition, underemployment, and skills gaps, and help IEHPs fully realize their professional potential. This session highlights strategies that support IEHPs from pre-arrival through to meaningful employment. The presenters address challenges related to time, distance, and scalability across online learning, simulation, credential validation, assessment, and employment. Attendees will learn how collaborative practices enhance course relevance and service effectiveness, ultimately supporting IEHP success in Canada’s healthcare system.

- **Shivam Oheri**, SOPA - Foreign Credential Recognition, *1. Supporting Newcomers Through Pre-Arrival FCR Navigation*
- **Rebecca Martin-Fraser**, ISANS - National Healthcare Language Program, *2. Strategies for Success – Overcoming Healthcare Communication Barriers*
- **Sandra Murdock**, ISANS - National Healthcare Language Program, *2. Strategies for Success – Overcoming Healthcare Communication Barriers*
- **Melynda St-Pierre**, Medical Council of Canada, *3. From Preparation to Practice: Exam readiness and licensure pathways for ITPs*
- **Amelia Goodlad**, ISANS - International Medical Graduates (IMG) Bridging Program, *4. Helping IEHPs Bridge the Gap to Meaningful Employment*
- **Leye Oyesode**, IMG, Past NHLP Participant, Med Student at Dalhousie University, *5. IEHP Testimonial and Success Story*

H6

143 - Understanding Newcomer Identities Through Community Connection: Intergroup Relations and Intercultural Dialogue Across Alberta (Practical Workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

This collaborative session explores how community based cultural activities foster inclusion, strengthen intergroup relations, and counter discrimination across diverse newcomer populations. Presenters from ASSIST, NorQuest, and Care for Newcomers will share practices that create welcoming, empowering spaces for newcomers to express their identities, share their cultural heritage, and engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue. Through initiatives such as cultural festivals, land-based learning gardens, Indigenous led teachings, classroom community connections, and youth engagement programs, the session highlights effective, evidence informed models that promote belonging, citizenship, confidence, and positive newcomer community relationships. Together, these approaches demonstrate how cultural sharing can shift narratives and build stronger, more inclusive communities.

- **Gabriela Jessome**, ASSIST Community Services Centre, *Creating meaningful community connections through shared stories and hobbies*
- **Danielle Barnes**, Norquest College, *Community Connections*
- **Qabas Al-Sammarraie**, Care for Newcomer, *SNAP Youth Program*
- **Amanda Pike**, ASSIST Community Services Centre

H7

102 - Beyond Access: Creating Culturally Responsive Community Programs (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

This roundtable discussion highlights strategies that the Welcoming Communities program utilizes to empower community, the business sector, and government departments, inclusive of healthcare, in cultivating culturally responsive community programs. It demonstrates how these entities focus on redesigning their approach to be inclusive of newcomer realities by considering mental health, and cultural expectations, amongst other realities.

- **Colleen Belle**, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)
- **Ayo Aladejebi**, Department of Labour, Skills, and immigration
- **Colleen Belle**, Immigrants Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)
- **Leah MacEachern**, M.Sc., SLP-Reg, S-LP (CHearing & Speech Nova Scotia (HSNS)
- **Mike McKinnon**, Musquodoboit Harbour & Area Chamber of Commerce & civic Affairs (MHACCCA)
- **Rachelle Turple-Christmas**, Parks & Recreation, Halifax

H8

103 - From Newcomers to Game-Changers: Examining Immigrant Skill Utilization and Retention in Key Sectors (Practical Workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

Canada needs skilled immigrants to close labour gaps in key growth sectors, yet many newcomers in Canada are sidelined, working below their education level. Moreover, recent

research from CBoC found that higher-skilled immigrants are more likely to leave Canada than lower-skilled immigrants. This workshop will share new data on skill mismatch and skill wastage of immigrant professionals in healthcare, construction and hospitality, and explore trends in onward migration from Canada. Participants will strategize on how to retain skilled professionals. The conversation will encourage diverse perspectives and collaboration to identify practical strategies for improving immigrant skill utilization and retention.

- **Alice Craft**, The Conference Board of Canada
- **Federica Guccini**, The Conference Board of Canada, *Exploring Skill Gaps and Barriers in the Construction, Health, and Hospitality Industries across Canada*
- **Ather Akbari**, Saint Mary's University
- **Hans de Wit**, Shannex Inc.

H9

115 - Empowering Change: AI for Impact, Real Stories, Real Solutions (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

As Settlement SPOs are reacting to sector funding changes, they need to understand and develop strategic responses to how AI will change their work and service delivery. Join three immigration and settlement organizations as they reflect on their AI for Impact journey in this engaging panel session. Hear how each organization navigated the adoption of AI and Generative AI, from initial readiness assessments to piloting innovative solutions. Panelists will share practical lessons, challenges faced, and strategies for responsible, inclusive AI implementation. This session offers actionable insights, inspiring stories, and peer-to-peer learning for organizations seeking to drive impact and efficiency through ethical AI adoption.

- Moderator: **Bruce Dewar**, LIFT Impact Partners
- **Shelly D'Mello**, Intercultural Association of Victoria
- **Patrick MacKenzie**, Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia
- **Elise Herzig**, JIAS Toronto (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services)

H10

121 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block

121a - Place & Belonging for Immigrants in Edmonton: Transportation, Housing, & Policy (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Place and Belonging for Immigrants in Edmonton: Transportation, Housing, and Policy explores how immigrant futures are shaped through city systems and community action. Drawing on two community based research projects, we discuss immigrant seniors aging in place, intersectional analyses of housing policy, and a multicultural organization's partnership to try to build inclusive

housing. This workshop shares community-based insights and policy recommendations to advance belonging, equitable housing, and mobility for immigrants.

- **Nichole Lusk**, University of Alberta
- **Katie MacDonald**, Athabasca University
- **Shashi Goel**, Indo-Canadian Women's Association

121b - Mapping Systemic Friction: Governance, Housing, and Retention in a Rapidly Growing Alberta (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

Focusing on Alberta's unique experience, this workshop maps the systemic friction points that hinder immigrant integration and retention. Speakers address the unequal impact of population flows on urban housing affordability and the limited settlement capacity undermining retention in small and rural municipalities. Further research examines the critical gaps in policy impacting low-skilled migrant workers' housing and the necessity for a shared understanding of roles across municipal, provincial, and federal governance. The session offers practical, evidence-based ideas to reorient services, from macro-governance to micro-solutions like community food initiatives.

- **Feng Qiu**, University of Alberta
- **Elizabeth Onyango**, University of Alberta
- **Adila Mehjebin**, University of Alberta
- **Stephen Baffoe**, University of Alberta
- **Nimil Hussain**, University of Alberta

H15

125 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block

125a - Advancing Intersectional Approaches: Exploring Strategies Centering Youth to Tackle Unemployment and Promote Civic Participation (Educational lecture / Présentation éducative) (EN)

Youth face systemic barriers that contribute to unemployment and limit civic participation. This workshop examines these challenges and explores solutions through labour market insights and community-based practices, highlighting strategies such as trauma-informed engagement, intercultural dialogue, and holistic, youth-centered program design to create lasting impact. Initiatives like EmpowHER and Employability Skills for Youth (ES4Y) empower youth, especially those facing barriers, through education, training, and meaningful work experiences supported by mentorship, career coaching, and financial assistance. The workshop will demonstrate how these initiatives equip youth with the skills and confidence to transition into the labour market

- **Ayesha Bhikha**, Achēv
- **Samantha Iyere**, Achēv

- **Therese Guidolin**, Achēv
- **Kosalina Vignarajah**, Achēv
- **Althea Samuels**, Achēv

125b - From Access to Impact: Reducing Disadvantage in Newcomer Workforce Programs (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Newcomers to Canada face persistent barriers in accessing workforce programs, from language and credential gaps to limited familiarity with sector expectations. This roundtable uses insights from EPIC HC and EVolve Skills to explore strategies that reduce disadvantage and expand equitable access. Discussion will highlight systemic barriers, inclusive program design, culturally responsive supports, and employer engagement practices that improve outcomes. Participants will gain practical, evidence-informed approaches to strengthening access, employment readiness, and meaningful workforce participation for immigrants and newcomers. These insights aim to inform policy, program planning, and community collaboration across sectors.

- **Shobana Thangavadivel**, Achēv
- **Tanvi Sukhija**, Achēv

H16

55 - Reimagining Indigenous-Newcomer Relations (Practical Workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

Drawing from insights gathered through a national survey of Local Immigration Partnerships on Indigenous engagement, this interactive workshop begins with reflection on why building relationships with Indigenous communities is important. Participants will hear from an Indigenous speaker on how to successfully build meaningful partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, then engage in peer discussions to explore steps toward their own relationship-building journey. The session includes collaborative activities to identify barriers and co-develop practical strategies resulting in actionable tools, deeper understanding, and greater confidence to integrate Indigenous engagement into programs and partnerships in authentic, respectful, and sustainable.

- **Joan Frame**, North York Community House

H17

19 - From Grants to Growth: Building Sustainable Funding Models (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

This session explores SODS's journey in diversifying funding through major fundraising campaigns. We highlight the creation of the Women's Business Hub, launched with government support, and our intentional shift toward a sustainable revenue model powered by community

partnerships, social enterprise, and strategic fundraising. Attendees will learn how we built long-term stability while maintaining mission integrity and expanding impact for newcomer women entrepreneurs

- **Ahmad Majid**, Saskatoon Open Door Society - Manager of Fund Development and Communications

Block I / Bloc I: 3:30 pm – 4:45 pm

I1

44 - Leading Through Change: Saskatchewan's Refugee Resettlement Success in a Shifting Immigration Landscape (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Canada's 2026–2028 Immigration Levels Plan introduces significant shifts for organizations supporting newcomers. Despite increased arrivals and housing pressures, Saskatoon Open Door Society has demonstrated strong leadership through rapid-scale coordination, effective cross-sector collaboration, and innovative service models. This workshop shares frontline strategies for managing large refugee intakes while maintaining high-quality settlement outcomes. To strengthen national relevance, the session may be delivered jointly with JIAS Toronto, offering cross-regional insights and highlighting promising practices that contribute to a more resilient and responsive resettlement system across Canada.

- **Zainab Al-Musawi**, Saskatoon Open Door Society, *Coordinating Large-Scale Refugee Arrivals Through Leadership, Innovation, and Community Collaboration in Times of System Change*
- **Ashfaque Ahmed**, Saskatoon Open Door Society, *Organizational Leadership Insights in a Shifting Immigration Context*

I2

46 - Strategies for overcoming the skills gap / Underemployment / Entrepreneurship (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Despite having their credentials recognized, many Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) continue to face underemployment due to systemic barriers and skills mismatch. Through the Path2Practice for IENs program, we apply adult learning principles to deliver job readiness workshops tailored to IENs' unique needs. The workshops focus on translating their skills into Canadian employers' expectations while providing personalized career planning for successful workforce integration.

This roundtable shares practical examples and innovative approaches—such as adaptive curriculum and confidence-building—that have helped IENs achieve meaningful employment, and invites participants to exchange insights and solutions to reduce existing barriers.

- **Moderator: Kim Pena Smith**, Mentorship Coordinator
- **Irina Kalish**, Workshop Coordinator, *From Barriers To Employment: Strategies For Successful Integration Of Internationally Educated Nurses*

I3

3 - Epistemic justice for children and youth with refugee backgrounds (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

This presentation aims to broaden conceptions of language learning of children and youth with refugee experiences. In most host countries, youth and children with refugee experiences are seen through a deficit lens and their time in exile viewed as an interruption in their educational trajectory. By drawing in from decolonizing theories, we highlight the alternative yet valuable affordances they bring to classrooms. By centering refugee learners lived experiences, we argue for a shift in how educators understand language acquisition—not as isolated from life history, but deeply intertwined with complex transnational realities of migration and resettlement.

- **Tamam Youssef**, University of Manitoba
- **Giuliana Moura**, University of Manitoba
- **Natasha Oduor-Owino**, University of Manitoba
- **Rawia Azzahrawi**, University of Manitoba

I4

97 - National Migrant Worker Support Program Summit Conclusion (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

On March 3 and 4 of 2026, MOSAIC and CCIS will host the National Migrant Worker Support Summit in Abbotsford. We will be welcoming stakeholders from across the country including: Federal, Provincial and Municipal public servants, diplomats, non-profits and migrant workers. The main focus is that the event concludes with the elaboration of an executive document that serves as evidence of the collaborative work that has been done towards the improvement of the labour conditions of Migrant Workers in Canada. The document will include success stories, challenges and strategies moving forward. As anti-immigrant rhetoric increases in Canada is it fundamental to share how Migrant Workers are essential in our growth as a nation.

- **Moderator: Hugo Velazquez**, MOSAIC
- **Jessica Juen**, CCIS, *MWSP lessons learned from the Prairies*
- **Fernando Borja**, FERMES, *MWSP lessons learned from the Prairies*
- **Jennifer Rajasekar**, TNO, *MWSP lessons learned from the Prairies*

I5**99 - A Solution-Based Approach to Reducing Barriers for Immigrant and Refugee Youth: Strengthening Supports for Canada's Future** (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

This session offers a youth-centered, solution-focused look at reducing barriers for immigrant and refugee youth. It examines how redesigning systems, expanding supports, and engaging communities can foster equity and help youth thrive while advancing Canada's immigration and inclusion goals. The workshop outlines key challenges, disrupted education, trauma, language barriers, discrimination, mental-health stress, and complex systems, and highlights effective strategies such as mentorship, community programs, cross-sector collaboration, culturally safe and trauma-informed services, and family-centered supports. Participants will gain insight on strengthening youth inclusion and contribution to Canada's future.

- **Mercy Francis**, GLHCSS
- **Ines Ghazzi**, AIDE

I6**110 - Integrated Pathways: COSTI and the Ismaili Centre's Collaborative Approach to Settlement and Employment Support** (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

COSTI will showcase its innovative community and service integration model, developed through a dynamic partnership with the Ismaili Centre – Toronto. This thriving collaboration combines language and skills training with wraparound settlement and employment support to advance the social and economic integration of newcomer communities across the Greater Toronto Area, including the Ismaili community. Presenters will share insights into the model's design, implementation, and impact, highlighting lessons learned, best practices, and measurable outcomes. The session will provide participants with practical takeaways and inspiration for advancing cross-sector collaborations that promote inclusive and sustainable newcomer integration.

- **Miranda Boffo**, COSTI Immigrant Services
- **Aleem Punja**, The Ismaili Centre - Toronto

I7**123 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block****123a - From Fieldwork to Infrastructure: Justice Navigators and the Future of Newcomer Legal Access** (Roundtable / Table ronde) (EN)

Newcomer legal needs are well documented across Canada, yet system responses remain fragmented, inconsistent and structurally fragile. Drawing on Alberta's Justice Navigator model, this roundtable explores how research findings can be translated into sustained system and infrastructure change along three distinct domains of competency-based training, shared evaluation frameworks and cross-sector coordination. Rather than treating Justice Navigation as a frontline activity, this session examines how to build the actual system architecture required to make it work. We map the specific structural elements needed to transform research findings into a functioning ecosystem and explore how these components can be adapted.

- **Andrew Lam**, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies

123b - Access to Justice in Canadian Immigration (Educational lecture / Présentation éducative) (EN)

Newcomers to Canada increasingly experience unique and complex immigration challenges without access to legal representation or advocacy. These complexities are particularly salient among the LGBTQIA+ community, women who have or are experiencing gender-based violence, refugees who are separated from family members and individuals with precarious immigration status. Those who are the least likely to be able to afford legal support are the ones who need it most and are at a higher risk to experience issues with housing, employment, healthcare, and other social services. What are our communities doing to combat this systemic problem and access to justice issue? Join Maria Mulcahy, PLIAN's Newcomers Project Coordinator, and Meghan Felt, Immigration Lawyer at McInnes Cooper to delve into this timely and critical issue.

- **Moderator: Meghan Felt**, Immigration Lawyer, McInnes Cooper
- **Meghan Felt**, Immigration Lawyer, McInnes Cooper
- **Maria Mulcahy**, Public Legal Information Services of NL

18

124 - Note two separate presentations in this session time block

124a - Strengthening System Responses to Cross-Border Family Violence: Insights from CWICE's Emerging Work (Educational lecture / Présentation éducative) (EN)

This presentation explores how family and intimate partner violence crosses borders and affects Canadian citizens, dual citizens, and permanent residents. Drawing on CWICE's initiative to track cross-border violence concerns, it highlights risks when families travel or live abroad, including exit-control barriers, document withholding, international custody disputes, and limited consular authority. The session also outlines system constraints within Canada when families are overseas and shares strategies for cross-border safety planning, collaboration, and supporting families seeking safety and returning to Canada.

- **Alicja Grabarczyk**, Peel CAS-CWICE
- **Claudia Obreque**, Peel CAS-CWICE
- **Rosario Elmy**, Peel CAS-CWICE
- **Maria Macias**, Peel CAS, Family and Intimate Partner Violence Team
- **Maresa Gervais**, Peel CAS, Family and Intimate Partner Violence Team

124b - Roots to Resilience – Understanding and Addressing the Intersections of Substance Use and Domestic Violence within newcomer communities (Practical Workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

Substance use and domestic violence often intersect in newcomer communities, shaped by complex layers of migration trauma, isolation, mental health, stigma, and structural barriers that can limit help-seeking. This workshop introduces Roots to Resilience, a multifaceted approach developed by Elmwood Community Resource Centre to support newcomers' mental, physical, and overall well-being.

As policy shifts continue to reduce access to essential supports, Roots to Resilience underscores the importance of culturally grounded, trauma-informed interventions that protect family well-being and strengthen newcomer resilience.

Participants will leave with practical tools to better support clients across the continuum of prevention to recovery.

- **Anne Oserin-Pinnock**, Elmwood Community Resource Centre

19

127 - Settling on Indigenous Lands: Decolonizing Migration, Belonging, and Settlement Practice (Practical Workshop / Atelier pratique) (EN)

This interactive workshop brings together Indigenous leaders, settlement practitioners, educators, and community organizations to explore what it means to settle on Indigenous lands. Grounded in decolonial frameworks and the Letter to Prospective Immigrants, the session weaves critical discourse with practical application. Participants engage Indigenous historical perspectives, examine current settlement, policy, and post-secondary practices, and explore a decolonial toolkit for reconciliation and equity work. Through facilitated dialogue, shared reflections, and applied tools, the session supports relational accountability and challenges settler-colonial assumptions while offering concrete strategies for fostering respectful, reciprocal Indigenous-settler relationships across institutions and communities within evolving migration systems and public institutions.

- **Layla Haddad**, Policy Analyst, Lil'wat Nation, Mount Currie | Inclusion Analyst, Inclusivity
- **Jasmindra Jawanda**, Urban/Cultural Planner | PCHC-MoM Board Member

- **Carrie Jung**, Instructor, Capilano University
- **Stan DeMello**, Co-President, PCHC-MoM Pacific Canada-Heritage Centre Museum of Migration | Associate Teaching Professor Emeritus, University of Washington
- **Kayon Devcic**, Life Coach & Counsellor, PCHC-MoM
- **TaangGunaay Grinder**, PCHC-MoM Board Member, Capilano University student

I10

144. The Socioeconomic Impact of International Students in Rural Atlantic Canada: A Cape Breton Case Study (Panel Discussion / Discussion de panel) (EN)

This discussion explores the socioeconomic contributions and challenges of international students in rural Cape Breton, drawing on the latest survey data and analysis of recent federal immigration policy shifts. International students remain vital to regional economic revitalization through labour market participation, entrepreneurship, and cultural engagement, yet face barriers including a lack of meaningful employment, housing challenges, and retention difficulties. Through an evidence-based, regional analysis, this session examines how ongoing IRCC policy changes affect newcomer settlement and short and long-term economic outcomes in rural Atlantic Canada, offering local insights and recommendations.

- **Navy Thu-Thao Nguyen**, Cape Breton Island Centre for Immigration (CBICI), *Rural Socioeconomic Impacts of Shifting IRCC Policies: Survey Insights of International Students and Graduates' Experiences in Cape Breton*
- **Kailea Pedley**, Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP), *Social Dimensions of Immigration: Supporting Newcomers and Building Inclusive Rural Communities*

I11

140 - Workshop to be presented by World Education Services (Workshop / Atelier) (EN)

Session details to be confirmed

I12

11 - Sector Driven Solutions for Client Centred and Responsive LINC Service Delivery - BC/Yukon Sector Coordination Model (Case Study or Best Practice Session / Étude de cas ou séance sur les meilleures pratiques) (EN)

Despite the range of challenges facing SPOs providing LINC in the diverse BC/Yukon region, LINC Sector Coordination model is tapping into sector strengths to generate sector driven solutions across all areas of LINC through regular cross region collaborations to address complex client needs, program waitlists, staffing, funding changes, shifts in National directives, and local operational requirements to ensure LINC is consistent, effective, responsive and client

centred. Through multifaceted program activities BC/Yukon Sector Coordination model facilitates engagement across the region to draw from deep knowledge, expertise, and passion from all SPOs to navigate the complexities of LINC program delivery in a changing world.

- **Alison Heath**, MOSAIC
- **Xiaoyang Luo**, SRDC

I13

145 - Workshop to be presented by Paul Holley (Research or Project Presentation / Présentation de recherche) (EN)

Session details to be confirmed.

- **Dr. Paul Holley**, Research Director of ACS- Metropolis Institute / The Canadian Index for Measuring Integration and Inclusion (CIMII), Montreal, QC

Poster Presentations

P1

Negotiating Identities in Migration: Comparative Perspectives on Individual Selection Patterns and Structural Governance Frameworks Between Africa, Europe, and Canada (EN)

This study examines the intricate processes through which identities are formed and redefined throughout the migration cycle. It integrates both quantitative and qualitative data derived from migrant selection trends in Southern Africa alongside the governance frameworks that influence mobility between Africa and Europe. This study examines the interplay between individual decisions and broader policy frameworks, investigating how socio-economic backgrounds, perceived opportunities, and legal systems converge to shape migrant identities. The comparative framework positions these insights in relation to the Canadian experience, providing reflections on how inclusive migration regimes can more effectively harmonize development

- **Brian Mohammed**, Immigration Eswatini

P2

Race, credentials, and deskilling: A mixed-methods study of skilled, racialized immigrants in the Canadian labour market (EN)

This study examines the deskilling of skilled, racialized immigrants admitted through Canada's Federal Skilled Worker program in British Columbia. Using a survey (n = 111) and focus groups (n = 18), it reveals how credential devaluation, Canadian education requirements, limited social capital, and gendered barriers undermine labour market integration, even for advanced-degree holders. Findings highlight how immigration policy and labour market structures perpetuate racialized inequities, underscoring the need for equity-focused reforms to align skilled migration with meaningful employment.

- **Karun Karki**, University of British Columbia

P3

Mémoire et création artistique : innover pour résister à la haine (FR)

Les projets artistiques constituent des leviers puissants de lutte contre la haine, en valorisant les mémoires collectives et en favorisant le dialogue. Cette session présentera deux initiatives récentes : Harmonie des Cultures (rencontres musicales entre francophones, autochtones et diasporas africaines) et WAXI – Fils d'identité (exposition itinérante sur le wax et la mémoire

diasporique). Ces expériences démontrent comment l'art peut déconstruire les préjugés, promouvoir la guérison et renforcer la résilience communautaire. Le panel réunira artistes, chercheurs et acteurs communautaires pour discuter des liens entre pratiques artistiques, inclusion sociale et politiques publiques.

- **Moderator: Ines Ghozzi**, Actions Interculturelles Canada
- **Jacky Essombe**, African Friendship Society

P4

Sérinitii Project: Simplifying the path for immigrants to skilled trades in order to strengthen the capacities of employability and entrepreneurship stakeholders (FR)

From Express Entry eligibility criteria to integration into Skilled Trades in Ontario, the path can be complex for immigrants. The Sérinitii project aims to simplify this journey by making documentation related to prior learning assessment, apprenticeship, and certification more accessible while raising awareness. In the long term, it intends to replicate to better support both employability and entrepreneurship service providers in relation to the occupations listed in the National Occupational Classification.

- **Mikhaela Sullivan**, Réseau en Immigration Francophone du Centre Sud Ouest de l'Ontario

P5

Languages, Education Systems, and Recognition of Prior Learning, the skills trade example (EN)

This project supports immigrants in recognizing prior learning by integrating language, educational background, and Canadian equivalency. It connects newcomers' academic and professional experiences to national standards and offers a directory of organizations involved in recognition processes. Focusing on skilled trades—where labor shortages and diverse training paths are common—it provides a structured, inclusive tool to help understand, validate, and recognize foreign-acquired skills, enabling faster and more effective professional integration.

- **Mikhaela Sullivan**, Réseau en Immigration Francophone du Centre Sud Ouest de l'Ontario

P6**Revising Population Planning: Assessing Alternatives to Immigration-Led Approaches (EN)**

The future of population planning is no longer clear-cut. Traditionally, immigration was the primary solution for aging labor forces and dependency ratios. However, as public sentiment shifts and competition for high-skilled immigrants intensifies, relying solely on immigration is no longer a viable solution. This research tracks the perception of "replacement migration" in policy discourse and investigates alternatives used by Canada and other developed countries. It aims to identify potential policy solutions for Canada's long-term population management in a changing demographic landscape.

- **Myron Liew**, Carleton University

P7**Building Inclusive Neighbourhoods: Lessons from Immigrant and Racialized Older Women in Edmonton (EN)**

Immigrant and racialized older women play active roles in sustaining family and community life, yet face barriers to full participation in their neighbourhoods. Through community-based participatory research informed by intersectionality, we explored how neighbourhood environments shape belonging and mobility among South Asian and Arabic-speaking older women in Edmonton. Participants described strong cultural and social connections alongside challenges such as discrimination, transportation barriers, and limited access to welcoming spaces. Findings underscore the need for culturally responsive neighbourhood planning and community initiatives that promote inclusion, social participation, and well-being across diverse aging populations.

- **Shashi Goel**, Indo-Canadian Women's Association

P8**Macro-Level Drivers of Transatlantic Migration: Evidence from the UK–Canada Corridor (EN)**

This paper examines the macro-level economic, political, and social drivers shaping the increasing flow of migrants from the United Kingdom to Canada. Against a backdrop of rising living costs, declining public services, heightened crime concerns, and intensified far-right rhetoric in the UK, Canada is emerging as a preferred destination promising stability, economic opportunity, and social cohesion. Drawing on comparative indicators and emerging migration data, the analysis explores how structural push and pull factors interact to influence transatlantic

mobility. The study contributes to understanding contemporary migration shifts and their implications for policymakers in both sending and receiving states.

- **Kieron Blake**, ACS-London, UK

P9

Bridging Gaps in Health Care Service Utilization: A Community-Led Initiative for MENA Populations in Canada (EN)

Middle Eastern/North African (MENA) immigrant communities in Canada experience significant health needs yet persistently low utilization of healthcare services, driven by linguistic barriers, discrimination, and lack of culturally responsive care. SHAMS is a community-led initiative that investigates these barriers and co-develops interventions with MENA youth, families, and clinicians. Through culturally grounded education, barrier-identification research, and advocacy, SHAMS aims to reduce stigma, improve health literacy, and inform more equitable, culturally safe health services for MENA populations across Canada.

- **Mahmoud Noweir**, Waterloo/ UHN

P10

Understanding the Collective culture: best practices and trauma-informed tools for supporting immigrant & newcomer survivors (EN)

The poster will share best practices for supportive trauma-informed tools to work with immigrant populations centered around the collective culture. It includes information about the innovative Enhancing Wellness-M4Y project research preliminary results and app development. The tools will support mental wellness and crime prevention efforts. The poster will provide infographics based on the online survey results, preliminary focus group data analysis, literature review and the Best Practices manual for working with survivors from a culturally and linguistically trauma-informed framework.

- **Dr. Harjit Kaur**, Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society

P11

Understanding Complex Identities and Promoting Inclusion (EN)

While racialized immigrant older adults (RIOAs) may encounter challenges in connecting to the Canadian community, the group's characteristics such as culture, age, gender, and country of origin could create another barrier in socializing with each other. Participatory action research

among researchers, settlement organizations, and RIOAs through paired interaction, older adult café, and focused group was employed to navigate the barriers to promote social inclusion among RIOA in a western Canadian city. Ten participants highlighted the importance of communicating with each other as an essential factor in promoting their social inclusion. The research team recommends multisectoral collaboration to support the wellbeing of RIOA.

- **Moderator: Vivian Puplambu**, University of Regina
- **Jordana Salma**, University of Alberta
- **Anahit Falihi**, Saskatoon Open Door Society
- **Christina Nsaliwa**, Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
- **Florence Luhanga**, University of Regina
- **Joseph Osuji**, Mount Royal University
- **Festus Moasun**, University of Windsor
- **Obianuju Juliet Bushi**, University of Windsor
- **Oluwabukola Salami**, University of Calgary

P12

Empowering CLIC Instructors Through CCLB Digital Resources (EN)

This presentation showcases key resources from the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks to support CLIC instructors. These include practical teaching tools such as workshops, online modules, instructional videos, and classroom activities designed to support language development. The materials help instructors plan lessons, assess learners' progress, and apply CLB competencies in real-world communication. Overall, these resources provide clear guidance and best practices to ensure effective learning at all proficiency levels.

- **Moderator: Kaouter MEKERSI**, Centre des Niveaux de Compétence Linguistique Canadiens
- **Raoul Daguilh**, Centre des niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens

P13

Delivery of health and social programs for temporary and precarious status migrants in Ontario: An environmental scan (EN)

In response to Canada's shifting immigration landscape and its implications for temporary and precarious status (TAPS) migrants, this environmental scan aims to identify and describe the extent, range, and nature of health and social programs for TAPS migrants in Ontario. We identified 143 programs serving TAPS migrants, mostly implemented across southern Ontario and delivering broad settlement services and issue-specific programs. In contrast, there were limited programs in northern Ontario and for undocumented and non-status individuals. These findings provide a baseline understanding of existing programs serving TAPS migrants in

Ontario and offers insights that could inform future programs as migration policies evolve in Canada.

- **Warren Dodd**, University of Waterloo

P14

Supporting Newcomer Pregnant Women and Young Families: Insights from a 2025 Community Needs Assessment (EN)

This poster presents findings from a 2025 Community Needs Assessment led by Newcomer Knowledge Hub, an Immigrant Services Calgary initiative in collaboration with the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work. Using survey, focus group, and interview data, the study identified key barriers faced by newcomer pregnant women and families, including service fragmentation, language challenges, childcare inaccessibility, and financial strain. The poster synthesizes these insights and proposes integrated, culturally responsive service improvements. It also highlights ISC's Gateway model as an innovative approach that can inform policy, practice, and cross-sector collaboration to better support newcomer families.

- Moderator: **Zohaib Ajaz Faridi**, Immigrant Services Calgary
- **Zohaib Ajaz Faridi**, Immigrant Services Calgary
- **Wissam Shalaby**, Immigrant Services Calgary
- **Ajwang Warria**, University of Calgary

P15

Occupational Niches of Recently Graduated Visible and Non-Visible Minority Students in Canada: Who Takes the Low-Status Jobs? (EN)

Using data from the 2023 National Graduate Survey of Canada, this paper explored the occupational niches of recent graduates (n=12,034), comparing those of visible minorities to their non-visible minority counterparts who received degrees in 2020. Women, college graduates, those specializing in general fields such as Social Sciences and Humanities, Business and Management, as well as those of Black and/or Latin American minority backgrounds were among the most likely to perform low-status jobs.

Old abstract: Using data from the 2023 National Graduate Survey of Canada, this paper explored the occupational niches of recent graduates, comparing those of visible minorities to their non-visible minority counterparts who received degrees in 2020. The main research question guiding the research was whether visible minority status played a role in their insertion in low-status occupational niches while taking into account investments in human capital in the form of study programs as well as other factors yielding similar positions in Canadian labour markets. The sample of graduate students drawn for the study totalled 14,129 respondents

working full-time and or part-time representing approximately 463 thousand who graduated in Canada during 2020.

- **Fernando Mata**, School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies, University of Ottawa

P16

Informal Language Learning Through Connection and Skill-Building (EN)

Informal Language Learning Through Connection and Skill-Building The primary objective of this presentation is to demonstrate how newcomers can develop language skills in a natural, organic, and engaging way, outside of formal classroom or structured learning settings. By focusing on everyday interactions, social connections, and practical skill-building, newcomers can gain the confidence, independence, and cultural understanding necessary to thrive in their new communities.

- **Madhulika Handoo**, YMCA Immigrant Services

P17

Reconceptualizing Language Training Provision amid Immigration Reductions and Program Cuts: An Analysis of CanAvenue (EN)

This poster examines CanAvenue, a free, self-paced English and French language learning and settlement-orientation platform, as a scalable model of digital language and settlement support for newcomers. Through analysis of platform features and early implementation insights, it explores how self-directed online learning can address gaps created by waitlists, limited classroom access, and diverse learner needs. The poster considers pedagogical design, cultural relevance, and digital-literacy outcomes, and discusses implications for integrating policy and service delivery. Findings suggest that free, flexible platforms like CanAvenue can play a significant role in expanding equitable access to language learning in Canada's evolving immigration.

- **Sepideh Alavi**, New Language Solutions
- **Rob McBride**, New Language Solutions

P18

Closer Together: Closing Information Gaps Between Private Sponsors, Refugees, and Service Providers (EN)

The Connectors initiative is examining the role of information gaps in reduced uptake of

settlement services among privately sponsored refugees in Ontario. In this session, project leads will present on the project's key activities, including research, consultations, and two pilot studies, to better understand critical information gaps and barriers, particularly for sponsors from equity-deserving groups. Working with community groups and service providers, Connectors is also developing practical resources, training and recommendations for further strengthening this multi-partner relationship and enhancing newcomer experiences. We will conclude with a dedicated Q&A and discussion period.

- **Aziz Orya**, Refugee 613
- **Louisa Taylor**, Refugee 613

P19

Changing Course: How the COVID-19 Pandemic Shaped Canada's International Students' Reduction Targets (EN)

As Canada is changing course in reducing temporary migrants, this SSHRC funded poster presents quantitative data on the perception of international students in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic and connects these findings to the country's reductions in international students' targets. During the pandemic, international students faced academic disruption, financial hardship, social isolation, and uncertainty surrounding immigration pathways. By analyzing students' perception of the pandemic, the poster highlights the impact of COVID-19 on students' well-being, and examines how the new immigration policy may damage Canada's reputation as a desirable study destination for international students.

- Moderator: **Bharati Sethi**, Trent University
- **David Firang**, Trent University
- **Prof. Joseph Mensah**, York University
- **Patricia Samson**, University of Calgary
- **Samuel Owusu**, Graduate Student, Trent University
- **Mohammed Abdulai**, Graduate Student, Trent University
- **Anthony Mensah**, Graduate Student, Trent University

P20

Addressing Precarity Through Policy: A Mixed-Methods Study on Cultural Brokers in Canada's Immigration Landscape (EN)

In-depth interviews and survey data from our study reveal similarities and differences across provinces, underscoring how jurisdictional funding and policy choices shape stability and sustainability of cultural brokering as a career. The Cultural Broker workforce juggles supporting social determinant-related demands of newcomers and their own occupational precarity.

Drawing on segmented labour market theory, social capital theory, and a GBA Plus lens, we offer policy recommendations for governments and service providers to facilitate embedding Cultural Brokers as core infrastructure in Canada's immigration systems.

- **Dr. Sara Torres**, Laurentian University
- **Dr. Sally Ogoe**, Laurentian University

P21

Artistic Poster Presentation base on a true a true story – The journey beyond Life and Death (EN)

The Sub-Saharan African continent each day loses hundreds of unaccountable youth to irregular migration, sixty five percent (65%) risk all in pursuit of greener pastures at the peril of their lives through the desert and sea to reach the West, 'the land of Paradise. Twenty percent (20%) are confidently tricked or misled to Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon into modern day slavery by the human trafficking and smugglers while the fifteen percent (15%) flee their country of origin in seek of refugee. As twenty-first (21st) century promises to be a new age of migration, the paradigm have changed. Thirty percent (30%) are been confronted with forced deportation while seventy percent (70%) remain isolated as 'displaced undocumented migrant' who will soon be confronted with shattered dreams. Undocumented migrants faces various decree of inhumane treatment when caught up by the law as illegal immigrants which create adverse conditions on their lives resulting in mentally, physiologically and emotional trauma before been forced to return. The trend of these irregular migration represents one of the biggest humanitarian tragedies, rendering most African youths who were intellects and vision holders to be hopeless and vulnerable within the scope living as undocumented migrants and slaves for which they constitute the greater work force of their nation. Forty five percent (45%) of the deportees re-migrates through failed secure borders while the seizure of their passports have become phenomenon with a long history, especially in Africa. These brain-drain have been a major challenge to both African and European governments on the growing negative effect of the 80% undocumented African migrants been displaced while the gap between documented and undocumented migrants keep growing yearly.

- **Richard Osei Bonsu**, Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana
- **Isaac Owusu-Takyi**
- **Bright Boakye Ntem**

P22

From Volunteering to Belonging: Fostering Inclusive Communities (EN)

This poster presentation, presented by the Saskatoon Open Door Society (SODS) and the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS), introduces distinctive volunteer programs grounded in practice-based Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles. The presentation shows how volunteer initiatives can promote inclusion, challenge prejudice, and strengthen community education. In a global context of unrest and social fragmentation, the presentation highlights strategies to engage diverse communities, including newcomers and long-term residents, to foster cross-cultural learning, mutual understanding, and social capital. It redefines volunteering beyond charitable service as meaningful, hands-on experiences that expand human connection.

- **Lisa Focardi**, Saskatoon Open Door Society

P23

Beyond Barriers: An Intersectional Examination of Access to Mental Health Services for Black Immigrant Men in Kingston, Ontario (EN)

This qualitative study examines Black immigrant men's access to mental health and addictions services in Kingston, Ontario. Using interviews with 12 participants, it traces recognition of need and help-seeking. Findings show that stigma, discrimination, and immigration stress can impede care. The study accentuates the need for targeted support for immigrant populations.

- **Bernice Yamoah**, Doctor of Science in Rehabilitation and Health Leadership, Queen's University

P24

From Newcomer to Entrepreneur: The Impact of IWEN (EN)

The Immigrant Women Entrepreneurship Network (IWEN) at ISANS is transforming Nova Scotia's entrepreneurial landscape by supporting newcomer and refugee women to start and grow their businesses. Through practical training, personalized mentorship, microloan support, market showcases, and inclusive networking events, IWEN helps participants build confidence and overcome systemic barriers. Partnerships with community and industry stakeholders, along with intercultural training, further promote gender equality and economic inclusion. This poster shares the journeys and impact of women from various countries and cultures who have taken part in IWEN, highlighting their progress, achievements, and contributions to the province's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

- **Christine Alvarez**, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia
- **Kahkashan Afrin**, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia

P25**Cultural bridges in immigrant homes: Jamila Mohamed's family preservation of identity through the "Coffee Room" (EN)**

In this poster, I will present my thesis about how immigrants preserved their heritage and developed their identity in the diaspora through cultural objects, such as handmade baskets, coffee rituals, and memories. My work centred around the coffee room in the home of Jamila Mohamed, an Ethiopian immigrant living in St. John's, Newfoundland. I investigated how the coffee room served as a cultural bridge, connecting Jamila and her children to Harar and helping them feel less disconnected from their homeland and less isolated in their new home. In the coffee room, Jamila and her family practice their rituals together, and they strengthen their connections to their new community in Canada not by abandoning or losing their culture, but through pride, actively participating in and adapting their heritage. Through this work, I discovered that immigrants continue to practice their culture not only to preserve their heritage and identity, but also for resistance in their new place against visible and invisible racism, protecting them from falling into the dark hole of identity questions, such as "who are we? Where did we come from?"

- **Aisha Elgayar**, Community Centre Alliance

P26**Intersecting Barriers to Inclusion: Lived Experiences of Racialized Immigrant Women (EN)**

The stories of racialized immigrant women from various backgrounds are brought together in this presentation to illustrate the intersecting barriers that perpetuate inequality and hinder full inclusion. It examines how racism, poverty, inequitable credential recognition, gender-based violence, and systemic discrimination affect their lives and sense of belonging while limiting their access to opportunities and resources.

- **Sharmila Ranabhat**, Community Advocate