Using Physical and Social Activities as Opportunities for Newcomer Integration

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Please contact Lucy Buchanan-Parker, at projects@amssa.org or 604-718-2784.
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1. Downloading PowerPoint Presentations
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Join the Conversation on Twitter

• Use #AMSSAevents to follow the conversation on Twitter and connect with other webinar participants.
• AMSSA can be found on Twitter @amssssabc
What is AMSSA?

• A provincial association of organizations focused on immigrant settlement, integration and language, as well as diversity and inclusion.

• Contracted by IRCC to support a broad range of immigrant and language service providers and stakeholders in BC.
Welcome & Overview

Farah Kotadia
Acting Program Director
Welcome & Introductions

Panelists
Friday Games Night

Jacquie Bernier
Smithers Community Services Association
ENGLISH LANGUAGE & MULTICULTURAL SERVICES PROGRAM
SMITHERS COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

Case Study: Friday Games Night @ Municipal Campground
Welcome to Smithers
  - Our Community

Smithers Community Services Association
  - SCSA

English Language & Multicultural Services Program
  - ELMS

Case Study: Friday Games Nights
  - Project Development
  - Key Elements
  - Successes
  - Challenges
Welcome to Smithers

- Smithers is a small mountain town with nearly 6,000 residents.

- The town of Smithers is situated northwestern British Columbia directly on the Trans Canada Yellowhead Highway (Route 16), approximately half way between the cities of Prince Rupert and Prince George.
Smithers Community Services Association

Smithers Community Services Association (SCSA) is an accredited charitable organization with 40+ years’ experience developing and delivering programs, services and partnerships that enhance the quality of life for all members of the community.

SCSA offers a wide range of programs. In addition to English Language and Settlement Assistance Services accomplishments include the development and operation of:
- affordable family housing,
- assisted-living facilities,
- volunteer center,
- foster parenting and care giver support,
- literacy training,
- public transportation,
- and other social service programs.
The English Language & Multicultural Services (ELMS) Program empowers newcomers to Canada to live full lives in our community!

The ELMS Program offers:
- LINC classes and volunteer tutor matching,
- Settlement Assistance & Employment Services,
- Cultural learning activities,
- and weekly drop-in community groups.
English Language & Multicultural Services Program

Client Demography:
- In the last fiscal year (April 2015 – March 2016) we assisted 75 clients (3 x more than planned!!!!)
- Clients originated from 24 countries. The majority of clients come from:
  - Asian Countries (42%)
  - Europe (31%)
  - Africa (16%)
  - North & South America (11%)
English Language & Multicultural Services Program

ELMS Staff & Volunteers:
- Program Coordinator
- Settlement Support & Community Engagement Worker
- Employment Services Case Manager
- English Language Instructors
- Volunteer Tutors & Mentors
Main funders are:
- Federal Government (Language and Settlement Services)
- Provincial Government (‘Top up’ funding)
- WCG International (Employment Services)
Friday Games Nights – Case Study

B.C. communities with the most Syrian refugees

Other smaller communities with active refugee sponsor groups, including Pender Island, Smithers, and Salmon Arm also have a high per capita rate of refugees.
Friday Games Nights – Case Study

The idea to organize weekly Game Nights during the summer months came up was we observed the following developments in the ELMS program:

- drastic increase in client numbers in 2016, when Smithers welcomed 25 refugees from Syria and DRC.
- Budget limitations while trying to accommodate existing and new clients with identified settlement- and language learning needs.
- Good previous experience with Game Night activities & the Municipal Campground as a venue for Potluck Picnics.
Friday Games Nights – Key Elements of the Project

- Low cost for Program (Budget restrictions)
- Activity that suits and speaks to all ages, cultural backgrounds, and skill levels
- Activity that can accommodate different group sizes (5-25 participants)
- Integrative activity that will connect newcomers to long time community members
Friday Games Nights – Key Elements of the Project

- Accessibility and facilities of Venue
- Continuity of project – especially during summer months when many services (schools...) take breaks
- Activity reflects what “Canadians” do
- Good activity for volunteers to participate
- AND IT IS FUN!!!!
Friday Games Nights – Municipal Campground

- **Free** of charge
- Close to town – **accessible** by foot, bike or car
- **Facilities** offered include: shelter (cookhouse) in case of bad weather, washrooms, park benches and tables, fire-pits and fire wood, and a new playground.
- **Community Connection** – Day use area is frequently used by locals as well as camping guests from all over the world.
The simple games ensured people with all levels of English could participate.

We encouraged people to bring games they would like to play and introduce.

Most popular were Dominos, Cards, Scrabble, Soccer, Badminton, Frisbee, and Boccee.
Friday Games Nights – Volunteers

Volunteers
With the support of a 16 year old volunteer, we could reach more children and youth.

Other volunteers participated on a drop in basis

Campfires & Snacks
We did not provide any food for game nights – participants brought snacks to share. We also had campfires going and enjoyed smores.
Friday Games Nights – Challenges

- Weather
- Friday Nights through July and August - Staff/Volunteer Availability
Friday Games Nights – Successes

- Participation:
  - 41 clients participated in total
  - 14 clients participated in average
    (in addition: 21 children (0-12)/5 youth (13-18))

- Community Connection – a lot of interest by locals and camping guests.

- Improvement of communication skills & social interaction through games, also for clients with lower English skill level

- New language learning through new activities (games) and environment (i.e. racket & birdie, Municipal Campground)

- Settlement assistance: Newcomers got familiarized with the facility and where able to use the area on their own.
Analysis of Case Study

Farah Kotadia
Acting Program Director
Panel Discussion

Farah Kotadia  
*Acting Program Director*
Q&A with Speakers

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A Summer Day Camp for Syrian Refugee Children

Michelle Redfern,
Cowichan Intercultural Society
Cowichan Intercultural Society

CASE STUDY
Summer Day Camp for Syrian Refugee Children
Our Service Area

Since 1981

We have worked to be leaders in building inclusive and welcoming communities, where every person feels valued and has a sense of belonging.
Programs and Services

- Settlement Services
- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (with limited Childcare)
- Employment Assistance
- Men, Women, Children, Youth and Elders Groups
- Community Connections including Bridging, Tutoring and Mentoring Programs
- Community Outreach
- Sponsorship Agreement Holder
- Intercultural Partnership Network
- One World Festival
STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

23 F/T, P/T and Contract Staff speaking more than 11 languages

- 2 Full Time Settlement Coordinators
- 2 Part-Time Settlement Assistants
- 4 Part-Time Settlement Program Coordinators (Community Connections, SWIS, Tutoring, Relationships)

• 120 Volunteers
Our Clients

In 2016 CIS Settlement Services assisted more than

• 275 IRCC Eligible Clients
• 130 BC Eligible Clients (TFWs, Naturalized Citizens, International Students etc.)
• 25 other (e.g. mothers and children without status, children of naturalized citizens etc.)
• 75 Clients registered in our LINC programs

Programs and Services Funded by IRCC, the BC Government, Targeted Grant Funding, Social Enterprise, Donations, Fundraising and Memberships
Since December 2015 CIS has welcomed 72 Syrian refugees including:

- 7 Government Assisted Refugee Families (42 individuals requiring wrap around services)
- 6 Privately Sponsored Refugee Families and Individuals (4 BVOR, 2 PSR, 30 individuals)
- 30 Adults (15 GAR, 15 Private)
- 42 Children
  - 28 School Age Children (17 GAR, 11 PSR)
  - 14 Under 5’s (10 GAR, 4 PSR)
CIS Syrian Refugee Children

- Under 5
- 5 - 8 years
- 8-12 years
- 13 and above

[Bar chart showing age distribution]

- PSR
- GAR
- Total

IMMIGRANT WELCOME CENTRE OF COWICHAN where cultures connect
CHALLENGES

• CIS office not big enough
• Parents and children under 5 needed to be co-located due to BC Child Care Legislation
• Most participants would have take bus, and transit service was very limited
• Shoestring Budget, only enough money to pay for staff
• Children did not speak English and no Arabic interpretation support was available
• Need to recruit and screen several committed volunteers in a short period of time
• Multi-age group of children
CIS managed to recruit some strategic youth volunteers through school counsellors and key contacts and the youth spread the message to their peers. They were the biggest asset to the program.
SWIMMING

Immigrants 4 times more likely than Canadian-born counterparts to be unable to swim
Board Games at the Library

Only did this once as children did not enjoy being confined in a small space and there were more conflicts and behavioural issues to manage.
Bowling
Art Based Activity Groups

Weekly expressive and arts-based groups facilitated by volunteer, registered counsellors. Children broken up into age groups.
Soccer
Final Event
Analysis of Case Study

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Q&A with Speakers

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Concluding Remarks

Farah Kotadia
Acting Program Director
• Please fill out the online evaluation form

• Sign up for Settlement Net:
  http://www.amssa.org/settlement-net/
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