

**Perceptions of Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)
Working with Refugees in a Large Urban School District:
An Exploratory Study of Program Successes and Challenges**

by

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Abstract

This dissertation is based on a qualitative case study that examined the experiences of Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) when working with refugee students and their families. Based on a written questionnaire of all SWIS workers in a large urban school district, 13 participants were interviewed to explore the SWIS workers' narratives to develop descriptions and interpretations of their experiences with refugee families with the intent of providing relevant insight into the program. Three general questions guided this research: 1. How this program has assisted refugee families in the settlement process?; 2. What successes and challenges SWIS workers encountered in their work?; 3. To what extent their experience has been congruent with the intended British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, Immigrant Integration Branch and the Ministry of Education outcomes?

This study focused on a large urban school district that services a significant refugee population. A case study was used to investigate and provide data about the SWIS workers' experience. The results of the interviews highlighted four key themes that SWIS workers perceive as barriers to successful settlement for refugee families—early settlement challenges; health; home/school relationship; and identity. In addition to these four themes, the findings suggest that many families are beginning the settlement process with severe limitations, prohibiting full engagement in the settlement process. The concept of a post arrival pre-settlement stage within a Taxonomy of Integration is explored.

Keywords: Cultural mediation; immigration; insider perspective; integration; multiculturalism; refugee; settlement

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List of Abbreviations

AMSSA	Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC
CCVT	Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
COSTI	Centro Organizzativo Scuole Tecniche Italiane
ELL	English Language Learner
ELSA	English Language Services for Adults
ESL	English as a Second Language
GAR	Government Assisted Refugee
GCIR	Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees
ISAP	Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
Ministry	Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, Immigrant Integration Branch and the Ministry of Education
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SWIS	Settlement Workers in Schools
TFWP	Temporary Foreign Worker Program
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VIP	Vulnerable Immigrant Population

Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

As a refugee receiving country, Canada has committed to accepting and settling refugee citizens into its country and, by extension, ensuring that mechanisms are in place to assist in the process of settling refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR; n.d.). Hearing the stories around the settlement experience of refugees I realized how profound an obligation this is. Although not specifically a program directed at the refugee population, the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program concerns itself with issues of settlement, culture, student integration, and achievement in schools and community for all newcomer families, yet the program has a unique impact on the refugee population for whom support systems are particularly beneficial. Refugees are an important concern for a refugee-receiving nation and the way in which they are received may prove to be an area of intense focus and at times criticism. For example, much debate has currently ensued in Canada in response to recent changes in the ability for refugees to have full access to public health care as a result of recent changes to Canada's *Refugee Protection Act* (Bill C-31, 2012). These current changes will be expanded upon in Chapter 2; however, these changes are important to reference at this early point to indicate the relevance of this study. In fact, as stated by Howard Adelman (1991), "Refugee policy is the litmus test of the concept of justice in a society" (p. 172). This study is not focussed intently on issues of immigration or refugee policy; however, Adelman's statement suggests a clear connection between the management of refugees by a host country and the way in which justice is enacted in a society. This is a bold statement perhaps, yet given the fact that refugees do not generally leave their country by choice but are forced to exit for a variety of reasons arriving in a host country, by and large, traumatized, it makes sense that Adelman would make such a claim. Refugees are an extreme example of immigration and their

experiences for the most part are quite unique from the mainstream immigrant who has had time to prepare emotionally—at least to some extent considering family reunification as very emotional for example—financially, and most likely physically in preparation for moving to a new country—a country of choice. Refugees are indeed a different matter and certainly refugee policy is embedded in concepts of social justice, human rights, and global responsibility: all areas that Canada continues to value and support. By extension of the concept of refugee reception as a measurement of social constructs and values, this paper explores how educational systems can be utilized to assist in improving and easing the way in which refugee families, arguable one of our most vulnerable populations, settle into our schools and communities. As a result these successes may extrapolate to other immigrant populations integrating into our school system and community at large. Thus, this research was undertaken to examine the SWIS workers' experience working with the refugee population.

1.2. Research Purpose

This study examined the day-to-day experience of Settlement Workers in Schools, hereafter referred to as SWIS workers, in their role as key agents in the settlement and integration of newcomer (a term commonly used in reference to immigrants both mainstream and refugee) families into schools and communities. Although the SWIS program serves all newcomers, this research focussed specifically on how this program impacts the refugee population. Refugee students and their families typically require not only language support, but they may also require additional and intense support around social and emotional issues, physical concerns related to past trauma, and mental health issues. In addition many refugees are arriving without relevant prior experiences or background transferable skills to their new county. The role of SWIS workers is more complex when working with refugees; thus by focussing on refugees this study offers a complex and detailed focus. The SWIS workers in this study were under a mandate, which was set through a partnership between the British Columbia Integration and Multiculturalism Branch of the Ministry of Regional Economic and Skills Development and the British Columbia Ministry of Education, to service the needs of newcomer students and their families by providing outreach services connected to: social services, community organizations, housing, employment, medical

needs, legal needs, English language training, counselling, and cross-cultural education. This broad range of services recognizes the emergent and varied needs of immigrant and refugee students and their families and sets the context for which SWIS workers work within. Connecting refugees to these services can be particularly challenging for SWIS workers as refugee needs may be impacted by the stress of their current situation, which is likely fraught with culture shock, poverty, health concerns, and a variety of other problems. These problems may be very intense and emergent and SWIS workers are faced with the challenges of facilitating and outreaching support to assist refugee families.

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the frontline activities of the role of SWIS workers in relation to the intended mandate as outlined by the Ministry as well as to hear candid expressions of the refugee experience and all its successes and challenges. There was no early assumption that either minor or major differences between the SWIS workers' experience and the Ministry objectives would be revealed through the personal interviews with SWIS workers, nor any initial sense of how SWIS workers viewed the Ministry objectives. The research focussed on the SWIS workers' experience working with refugee families by examining successes and challenges experienced and articulated by SWIS workers through the narrative descriptions of their observations from the field. This field approach has provided a unique perspective in understanding the day-to-day operations of the SWIS program. To direct the research process the following central question guided the research process:

- What were the lived experiences of Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), who were working with refugee families in a large British Columbian urban school district between 2008-2011, as they strove to meet the intended outcomes of the Settlement program?

By focussing specifically on the SWIS workers' experience when working with refugee students and families this research endeavoured to examine the most vulnerable population utilizing the program. The intent of this focus was to document the experiences of those accessing the program at the lowest starting point to assist in an overall increased understanding of the complexities of the role of SWIS workers. Again, drawing on Adelman's (1991) concept of refugee management as tautological, this seemed a legitimate starting point to embed this inquiry. This research concerned itself with settlement processes into schools and communities at large by looking at success

and challenges met along the way while adhering to intended outcomes of the SWIS program. As a microcosm, school communities too can be considered a litmus test based on their reception of refugees. For some refugee students attending school is a first-time experience creating a level of complexity and challenge for both the new student and the school community. With the ultimate goal of “helping children adjust to school culture and focus on learning”,¹ the following question was crucial:

- How has this program assisted refugee families in the settlement process into the school community and community at large?

The central question guiding this research focussed on unravelling the stories of each participant SWIS worker who has had recent experience working with refugee students and their families. To draw meaningful conclusions and recommendations it was important to hear first-hand, through the interview process, how SWIS workers viewed their role and the impact of their position within the context of offering a broad range of services while working with caseloads that vary. A case study methodology was deemed as the best choice to achieve this goal. Refugee family needs are great and demand a lot of attention by SWIS workers. This is not an easy job; therefore, the following question was intended as a guide for attaining this information:

- What success and challenges have SWIS workers encountered in this role?

The role of SWIS workers is complex and the integration of immigrant students into schools, in particular refugee integration, is not an easy process. SWIS workers have very succinct Ministry outcomes to adhere to as well as school district expectations. It was important for SWIS workers to express how their unique experiences have been congruent or non-congruent with the intended outcomes of the program. It was also helpful to hear from SWIS workers in the field their perception of the intended Ministry goals in relation to their position and to clarify their view regarding their role and how it manifests according to the outcomes on a day-to-day basis. The final question directly approached this query:

¹ Quote is from the initial SWS program's webpage
http://www.welcomebc.ca/wbc/service_providers/programs/settlement_program/stream1/swis.page

- To what extent has the experience of SWIS workers been congruent with the intended outcomes of the program?

The purpose of this research is to add to the growing body of knowledge of this grass-roots program. Ultimately, the outcome of this study may be of value to SWIS workers, school districts, the academic community, community workers, and at the highest level inform government programs. SWIS workers play a novel role in schools districts as they work directly within ethnic communities, who, for the most part, SWIS workers share the same ethnicity and language providing an unfiltered and precise account of the barriers facing students and their families as they strive to settle into schools and community. This is a valuable component of this role enabling an opportunity for authentic first-hand feedback of how the SWIS program is, or is not, impacting clients. Working with school staffs SWIS workers are able to share and articulate individual student and/or family background or concerns, and specifically, family needs that could impact the early settlement stage. Addressing concerns around family adjustment is critical to the long-term benefit of refugees; thus the SWIS program provides a distinct opportunity to assess and respond to the needs of refugees in an efficient and precise way. There are many barriers facing refugees and having SWIS workers working directly with this vulnerable group is a positive step toward successful settlement and integration. As SWIS workers are a relatively new role, much of what is reported by SWIS workers may inform policy and direct training for potential future program refinement and changes. This study will culminate in recommendations for reviewing the role of SWIS workers and/or support the current role that SWIS workers play in our schools and communities. The ultimate aim is to hear the first-hand experiences of these frontline workers and report information gained through a case study approach to complement any prior program reviews, studies, or evaluations of the SWIS program to date. By documenting and analyzing these experiences and embedding the larger concepts in a theoretical framework through the literature review and data presentation, this study presents a major body of research to school communities, the Ministry and the academic community.

1.3. Context of the Study

Education is a vital aspect of immigration management and immigrant services, particularly in relation to language training, occupational training and upgrading, the special educational problems of immigrant children, citizenship training and development, and the whole area of adjustment to Canadian life. (Hawkins, 1988, p. 78)

Although stated 35 years ago by a Canadian researcher of immigration history and policy, Freda Hawkins' (1988) point is as poignant today as it was then. What Hawkins was driving at is that it is critical for the host country to contemplate and implement services that will assist newcomers in the adjustment, in this instance, to Canadian life. For Hawkins, understanding and meeting the need for immigrant services results from increased research and education in the field of immigration. The more that is understood about the settlement and immigration experience the better equipped a host country becomes at easing the process itself. Recent research focuses on the reception side of immigration as a shared responsibility between host country and immigrant. Understanding the relevance of the role of the host country is an example of education improving practice and playing a vital role in immigration management. The SWIS program is a strategic response to the role the host country plays and attests to the growing need for newcomer services as immigration continues to be a phenomenon that requires careful and judicious management leading to efficient long-term integration for all newcomers.

Canada is a nation built on immigration; thus, concepts of settlement, integration, and multiculturalism have long been at the fore of Canadian national self-construction and policy. However, according to Freda Hawkins (1988), "Canada has had no settled view of immigration" (p. 33). This sentiment holds true today. Issues surrounding multiculturalism, identity, and integration continue to be well-debated constructs among commentators concerned with national identity (Bissoondath, 1994; Gwyn, 1995; Kymlicka, 2009; Taylor, 1994). Current changes to immigration policy in 2012 and heightened conversations by the Canadian Federal Government around issues of immigration continue to attest to this somewhat unsettled view of immigration. Recent relevant changes include: 1) Eliminating the backlog of old applications in the federal skilled worker category; 2) Reforming the federal skilled worker point system; 3) Creating a new Federal Skilled Trades program; 4) Modifying the Canadian Experience Class; 5)

Consulting with industry on a “start-up” visa; 6) Strengthening the overseas verification of education credentials; 7) Consulting on possible reforms to the Immigrant Investor Program; 6) Strengthening the Provincial Nominee Program (Saleem, 2012). This discussion around immigration is a timely discussion related to this study with recent feature articles in one of Canada’s leading media sources (Omidvar, 2012), and thus will be examined in more depth in Chapter 2 under the *History of Immigration* section. The SWIS program is well positioned as a solution-based program based on the SWIS program mandate that seeks to assist families into the settlement and ultimate integration into schools and community. As immigration is an ongoing activity in Canada, and our role as host country is increasingly recognized as integral as we strive for an integrated multicultural society, investigating programs such as SWIS will assist in providing insight into our successes and challenges in the area of settlement and integration.

Despite a healthy diversity of views amongst Canadian scholars, Canada is largely regarded as a global model for successful integration of immigrants into society (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, Kymlicka, 1998, Reitz, 2002) and continues to seek new and more complete ways to achieve this. Public schools are often viewed as a pivotal forum for tackling issues regarding diversity, integration, and multiculturalism. Will Kymlicka (1998) states:

A modern economy requires a mobile, educated, and literate workforce, and standardized public education in a common language has often been seen as essential if all citizens are to have equal opportunity to work in such an economy. (p. 29)

Ghosh and Abdi (2004) further suggest that, “the attempts at democratizing schools notwithstanding, there seems to be a rethinking of the role of schools and of their moral and political responsibility in contemporary societies” (p. 1). Kymlicka (1998) and Ghosh and Abdi’s (2004) statements attest to an increasing mandate of public education to undertake much larger issues than a traditional knowledge-based delivery of education to one that encapsulates a greater emphasis on social needs and attention to preparing students beyond academic readiness to include a pluralistic and democratic understanding for future success in society. This “rethinking” of school roles, along with an increasingly diverse student population, is at the core of this research project and, as will be examined, the SWIS program is a prime example of rethinking the role of schools

and in this case expanding the mandate of schools into the community. This study examined a recent innovation in the field of education and immigration that endeavours to improve on past and current practice in the area of integrating immigrant students into the public school system by providing a support model that serves the needs of both the students and their families. As the educational mandate, as prescribed by the provincial government, increasingly considers the important role family plays in the education of children a support network targeted at entire families, specifically those who are in their early stages of arrival to Canada, is relevant and timely.

The SWIS program recognizes the challenges facing immigrant students and their families during the settlement and integration process and acknowledges the need for schools to play a key role as students and families navigate the many barriers and demands facing them along the way. As stated in a final report prepared for the Ministry of Advanced Education:

Recognizing that schools are one of the first services with which newcomers connect in the community, the Ministry of The Attorney General and the Ministry of Education undertook a review of options to enhance the role of schools and school districts in the settlement of school-age immigrants and their families in the spring of 2007. (FERENCE WEICKER & COMPANY, 2008, p. 1)

This review of school roles has led to 20 school districts in British Columbia embracing the SWIS program to better facilitate the integration of immigrant and refugee families into schools and community in general. SWIS workers now serve in a role that offers newcomer families an opportunity to access services and connect with schools immediately in the critical early stages of settlement. Many families are considered to have multiple barriers preventing an easy transition into the host community. These families are often referred to as hard-to-reach immigrants, a term frequently used in reference to the refugee population and cited in the Ministry outcomes. To ease the bridging process SWIS workers are tasked with providing: settlement counselling, outreach services, workshops on settlement-related activities, general information about schools, information related to health, and employment finding assistance. The SWIS program, which originated in Ontario and is now offered in most Canadian provinces, attests to how far Canadian policy and initiatives have advanced and is concerned with present-day immigration and education issues; however, it is worthwhile to consider how

the SWIS program has resulted from the larger historical and progressive stages of refugee settlement. Thus, this study begins by providing a general understanding of historical and political shifts in Canadian immigration with one sub-section addressing refugee immigration specifically, and a second highlighting the current immigration context in this specific school district.

This historical and political overview of the host society is crucial to understanding the settlement and integration of immigrant populations within a society. As we approach what Reitz (2002) refers to as the “second great wave of immigration” (p. 1005), there is an ongoing emphasis on the changing roles of host countries. As such, part of the changing role of the host country is best viewed through an overall understanding of past immigration trends, waves, and history. Reitz (2002) points to global shifts in immigration patterns and the important role the host country plays: “Interest in the impact of host societies on immigrants reflects a recognition that international migration is an ongoing and increasingly global process” (p. 1005). Reitz (2002) further suggests four major dimensions of a multicultural society that emerge as significant in this new research thrust. These aspects of a multicultural society are:

1. Pre-existing ethnic or race relations within the host population;
2. Differences in labor (sic) markets and related institutions;
3. The impact of government policies and programs, including immigration policy, policies for immigrant integration, and policies for the regulation of social institutions; and
4. The changing nature of international boundaries, part of the process of globalization.

(p. 1006)

For Reitz, underlying each dimension is the notion of cultural change toward a direction of increased tolerance of ethnic and racial diversity. He suggests that cultural and institutional changes collaborate and are embedded within each of the interrelated themes or dimensions. These four dimensions exist in the Canadian context. Canada, overall, has representation and experience with a diverse number of ethnicities; therefore, many of its newcomers may settle into or access familiar ethnic communities. And, for those immigrants who are unable to access a familiar ethnic community, Canada has many programs in place to assist newcomers as they settle into their new community. In particular, most newcomers have access to English or French language

programs and many employment-finding services. As well, Canada, as a nation, attempts to align immigration based on differences in labour markets with the aim of matching newcomers to the current market demands of the country. Programs such as SWIS demonstrate the initiative and recognition of the need for programs to directly address immigrant settlement and integration. Finally, Canada, as with most immigrant-receiving countries, has recognized the current state of international boundaries and the process of globalization as a whole. As we are immersed in Reitz's (2002) notion of the second wave of immigration it is important to explore how Canada is positioned within the process of globalization. In order to build a solid case for the need of a program such as SWIS we must first identify some of the pre-existing ethnic or race relations within the host country (Reitz, 2002).

Canada is a multicultural country, and schools are considered places that foster this as is often indicated in school district mission statements, vision, and school board goals. In BC alone, over 20 school districts allude to multiculturalism or diversity in some manner in their mission, vision, or core belief statements. For example in a large neighbouring school district in the same metro area of this study this particular school district states a core belief:

Since students vary widely in their backgrounds, needs and abilities, and since there is no single approach to learning, schools should adapt their educational programs and services to the needs of each student insofar as an equitable application of resources will allow. (School District No. 38, "Policy 100," para. 5)

This statement recognizes that students do come from many different backgrounds and that education needs to align practices that support an equitable delivery of services. Although not directly stated, this is an example of a formalized belief that implies the diversity, complexity, and multicultural aspect of schools today and the need for education to adjust. Ghosh and Abdi (2004) remind us of the role education can play in fostering multiculturalism, "While education resists change, it is still the most significant vehicle for developing the concepts contained in the philosophy of multiculturalism" (pp. 177-178). They further state that, "This means broadening the definition of school and its goals to encompass difference as a basis for achieving a delicate balance between diversity and unity" (p. 178). Further, the Ministry of Education for British Columbia recognizes the role of schools and presents its Mission Statement in support of

preparing students for a diverse and pluralistic society. Their mission is to set the legal, financial, curricular and accountability frameworks so as “to enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic and pluralistic society and a prosperous sustainable economy” (BC Ministry of Education, 2004, “Mission,” para. 2).

The Ministry of Education’s (2008) *Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework* clearly supports and echoes the quotation highlighted above:

The Government of British Columbia is firmly committed to recognizing and honouring the diversity of all British Columbians. Diversity among people is one of the most prominent features of British Columbia’s society and our schools. (p. 3)

These two publications demonstrate the intent of the Ministry to emphasize that relevant frameworks are in place to support the integration of all members into our democratic and pluralistic society and the role public education plays in achieving this goal. Indeed, if we are preparing our students to live in a pluralistic society that values the beliefs and ideas of others, then surely concepts of multiculturalism, settlement, and integration must be on the minds of educators. Most certainly in the district examined in this study this is the case as multiculturalism and diversity are present at every level of the school organization. These are significant concepts, and for our English Language Learners (ELL) and their families, in particular refugee families, settlement and eventual integration is not easily accomplished and often requires tremendous and ongoing supports; hence, the initiation of the SWIS program.

1.4. Significance of Topic

Settlement services have a long history in Canada with early roots stemming from faith-based community organizations and well-established ethnic communities. Over time formalized settlement agencies were established to meet the needs of immigrants during the first settlement stages in Canada; some of these agencies have operated for over 50 years (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2012). The Canadian federal government has demonstrated increased involvement and commitment to settlement since the early 1970s. For example, in 1974 the federal government initiated

the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP), which focused on providing settlement services to immigrant families (Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, n.d.). Additional program incentives have been launched since then: Federal Integrations Strategy; Host Program (linking new immigrant families with host families); Language programs (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada and English Language Services for Adults) to name a few. A significant organization of the settlement delivery model came in 1995 when the federal government launched the Settlement Renewal process with an aim toward devolving services to provincial authorities. As part of this settlement renewal process the federal government sought to develop national principles to be administered provincially to provide a standard for the delivery of services (FERENCE Weicker & Company, 2008). The SWIS program is a recent addition to this trend. In 2007 the British Columbia Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Education reviewed options to improve the role schools and school districts can play in the settlement of school-aged immigrants and their families (FERENCE Weicker & Company, 2007). Upon results of this review the Ministry of the Attorney General contracted with 10 school districts located in the Lower Mainland to embark upon the first British Columbia Settlement Workers in Schools program (BC SWIS) (FERENCE Weicker & Company, 2007). Contracting with school districts proved to be a positive direction for the SWIS program in BC as indicated in a follow-up report (2008) that recommended, "The school districts should have the first opportunity to contract directly with Ministry delivery of the program (p. iii). Reasons cited for the recommendation included acknowledging that school districts have greater control, staffs will take ownership, SWIS workers will be better integrated into schools as part of district staff, or program, and additionally, schools have a deep understanding of student needs and the ability to coordinate the SWIS program with existing school initiatives. Not only do schools provide an appropriate infrastructure, they are also the first point of contact for immigrants arriving with children. This vantage point, I believe, is a critical aspect of the SWIS program.

Focussing on student and family settlement is an important direction for school districts to take as integrating newcomers into our schools and communities will continue to be challenging as populations remain diverse. In 2003, Zetter, Griffiths, Feretti, and Pearl made the claim that global migration continues to increase and will likely do so for some time:

International migration has reached historically unprecedented levels, and since global mobility and complex humanitarian emergencies show little evidence of abating, it is set to remain at high levels for the foreseeable future (Zetter et al., 2003). (as cited in Hannah, 2008, p. 33)

The immigration outlook for the Lower Mainland of British Columbia mirrors this global trend and continues to highlight the significance of this study. As reported by the Ministry of Immigration British Columbia in 2006, immigration to B.C declined in 2005, following the national trend; however, despite the decrease, immigration to BC was at its second-highest level since 1998 (BC Multiculturalism and Immigration Branch, 2007). Reportedly, 42,208 immigrants arrived in 2006, of which a reported 1,982 claimed refugee status. Noteworthy to this study is the 2006 Census, which indicated in the metro area of this study that the immigrant population had grown faster than the non-immigrant population (31% versus 4.6%) over the past five years (BC Multiculturalism and Immigration Branch, 2007). Immigrant share of the total population increased from 33.2% in 2001 to 38.3% in 2006 (BC Multiculturalism and Immigration Branch, 2007). Accordingly, English is not spoken at home by 57% of immigrants. Similar reporting by the BC Ministry of Immigration provides a 2010 overview that indicates since 2006 BC has welcomed, on average, 42,000 new immigrants each year. In 2010 BC welcomed 44,176 new immigrants showing an increase of 6.6% from the prior year. As of 2010 BC was behind only Ontario in terms of welcoming new immigrants (BC Multiculturalism and Immigration Branch, 2011). As our communities and country have grown through immigration rather than birth rates, and continue to do so, it is critical to provide support for newcomers in key areas such as: language, cultural, health, and financial aid. Increasingly, school districts are being looked upon as an extension of the traditional 3Rs (Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic) to include the role of a community outreach service. As such, the SWIS program helps to connect newcomer families to services and resources in both school and community with a long-term outcome of:

The expected long-term outcomes are better and faster integration of immigrant families into Canadian society, better integration of services for newcomer families, students are more focused on education and

academic issues, and school culture is more inclusive of newcomer families and their cultures and beliefs.²

This long-term outcome is not easily reached, yet it undeniably attests to the critical need to integrate families into Canadian society and the positive impact successful integration has on student wellbeing both socially and academically. This is a long-term outcome of the SWIS program and is supported by five clear Ministry outcomes that will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters.

In her examination of the role of education in the successful integration of immigrant students, Janet Hannah (2007) recognizes that:

Education plays a crucial role in the integration process, being a key site in which both the host and incoming populations learn with, and about, one another. Education systems are therefore placed under scrutiny in terms of the extent to which they facilitate intercultural understanding and inclusion, and judged by the educational performance of migrant and refugee children in comparison with the host community. (p. 6)

This is a strong claim that places schools as vehicles for fostering intercultural understanding and inclusion. Hannah's claim that educational systems are ultimately judged by how they manage immigrant children, in particular refugee students, is akin to Adelman's litmus test statement highlighted earlier in this chapter. Both statements are bold, yet have made a significant connection between the role schools, and society in general, play in creating an environment that is inclusive and supportive of immigrant needs. Hannah's statement supports the critical connection between schools and integration as an integral part of the process. It is a concept that resonates with educators at all levels and thus a program such as SWIS has been favourably received. The connection between school and community is substantiated by Joyce Epstein (2001), who suggests that:

There is widespread interest in integrating services across community agencies and in creating structures and processes that encourage interagency cooperation and collaborations to promote family support, family and student health, and student success in schools. (p. 57)

² Retrieved from <http://www.welcomebc.ca> at the time of this writing, Spring 2007.

The SWIS program may be viewed as a program that focuses on integrating services and promoting family support and, by extension, student success in schools. Epstein further states, “The community is one of the overlapping spheres of influence on student learning and development in the theoretical model of partnerships” (p. 57). The model of overlapping spheres highlights the inter-connection of school, family, and community.

Settlement is important and a timely topic and was recently substantiated by a news release by BC’s Ministry of Attorney General (2006):

Immigrants will be better able to adapt to life in their new home and contribute to the social and economic future of B.C with an additional \$71.5 million in federal funding for settlement programs over the next two years. (para. 1)

This announcement was part of a new program launched in British Columbia in 2007 called Welcome BC. This program recognizes the critical role a host country has in welcoming, settling, and eventually integrating newcomers into society. Welcome BC was initiated on June 13, 2007, with a general mandate to help:

ensure new British Columbians are able to settle, gain employment, become active members of their communities, and contribute fully to the social and economic prosperity of B.C. (Welcomebc.ca, n.d.a, para. 1)

Welcome BC is making a concerted effort to aim its focus on immigration practices, policies, and initiatives. A portion of this \$71.5 million in federal funding was directed to schools in a one-time grant offer along with provincial goals aimed to assist in settling immigrants into society and positions the SWIS program as reactive to the current demand for a strong focus on settlement for newcomers. This funding suggests a solid investment to our newcomer population as they settle into the BC school system. As school districts grapple with their expanding role the arrival of immigrant students presents significant challenges to staff, students, families, and care workers in schools. SWIS workers provide schools with a comprehensive understanding of different student needs, demonstrate a consistent approach to integration, and connect families to community resources/services, in addition to providing support for other immediate settlement needs. The SWIS model provides schools more time to prepare for incoming students as well as an integrated holistic approach to settlement. In fact, working

directly with school staff and administration in support of immigrant students and families is an expectation of SWIS workers.

Settlement and integration of immigrant students is a complex phenomenon. Settlement can mean a variety of things for students: speaking the language, understanding the culture, and experiencing a sense of belonging, all of which can be impacted and further complicated by issues of health, both physical and mental, as well as where their starting point on the settlement continuum is upon arrival in the host country and the amount of transferable background experience, skills, and education present. Adding to the complexity of settlement and adjustment is the psychological and sociological adjustment for students in schools, which may not always be easily identifiable as areas of concern around adjustment to school, yet these social aspects to integration are critical to success. Settlement is described as complex, and, as noted by Korac (2003) the very term “settlement” has complex implications, most certainly for refugee families:

Even the terms used to describe this process—absorb, assimilate, incorporate or integrate refugees—suggest the complexity, ambiguity and contention surrounding the issue. It is not surprising then that teachers and school staff often feel under-equipped to deal with these complexities. (p. 52)

Refugee students are faced with managing a new environment (schools) that moves at a fast pace, assumes requisite skills are in place providing prior knowledge and concept development, uses a common language (English), and promotes social and academic development. This environment may be daunting for students coming without a skill set that would provide for an easy transition into the new environment. In addition many schools are very large and overwhelming compounded by fast-paced and heavy timetables; therefore, schools may find it difficult to provide all the support needed for immigrant students and their families. In this arena SWIS workers have an impact as frontline supports designated to work solely with families upon their first few years in the country. SWIS workers typically speak the same language and are from a common cultural background of the families they serve, which can prove to be critical as some problems experienced by new immigrants can best be expressed and mediated through a shared language and cultural understanding; a service that is now provided in school districts through the role of SWIS workers.

With recent projections of a great immigration wave over the next couple of decades to Canada in general, and the Lower Mainland in the area studied specifically, and given the important role schools can play, the timing and relevance of this program is apropos. A recently published report by Statistics Canada (2010) suggests that by 2031 at least one in four Canadians will be from another country of origin the highest percentage of Canadians born outside of Canada since Confederation. Given the current demographics and projected increase in immigration this study is significant in many ways. It is important to understand the context of the host nation. We know that students are better equipped to deal with the challenges of schools, in particular when there are language and cultural barriers, if the home/school partnership is strong (Epstein, 2001), and the basic needs of the family are met. As a province built on immigration and a recent mandate of the province of British Columbia that BC becomes “The Best Place on Earth” with a direct link to “Welcome BC” this study is well situated in a relevant and timely subject area. These are important and ambitious goals for the province of British Columbia and a direct invitation for newcomers to settle in BC. This study provided a unique opportunity to investigate a relatively new program in British Columbia and offers a practitioners’ perspective—based on the field experience of SWIS workers—to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in the area of settlement and integration. Additionally, this research will be shared with school districts that offer SWIS programs with the intent of enriching their understanding of the role of SWIS workers and the important theoretical implications in this role. Much data collected for the SWIS program to date has been quantitative; thus a primarily qualitative approach based on the practitioners’ perspective may offer a complementary research component.

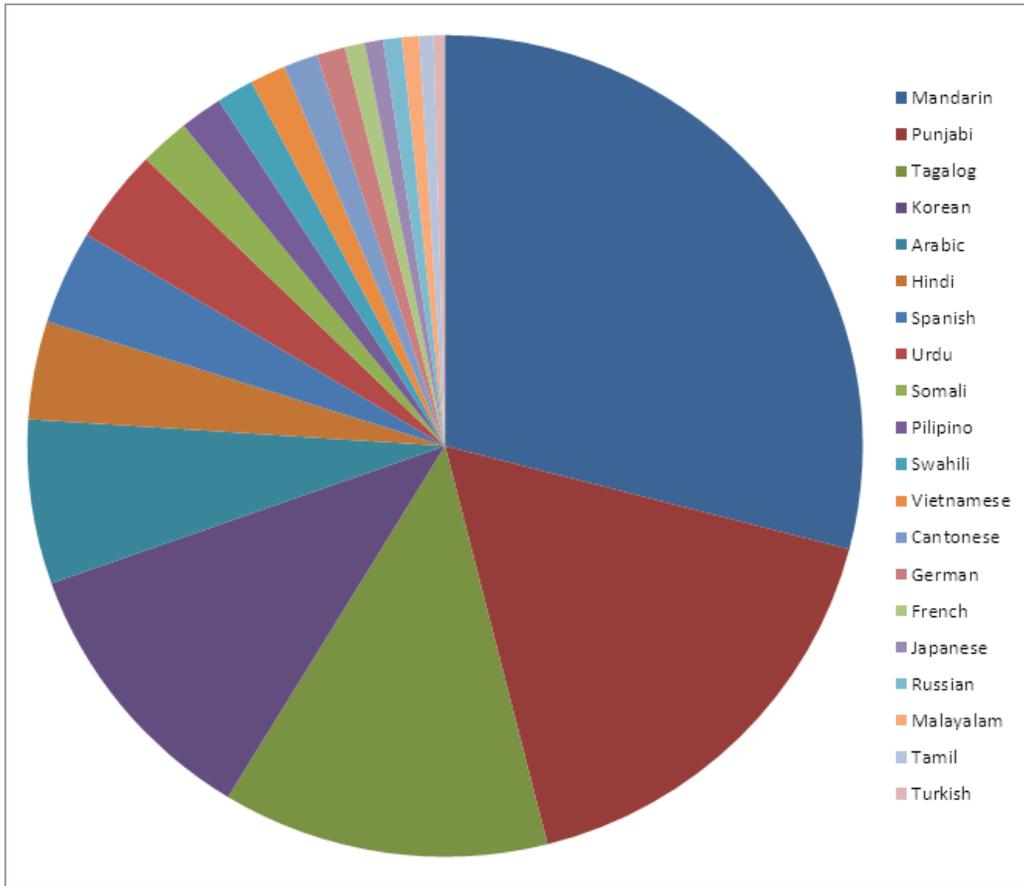
1.5. Introduction of School District Studied

The large urban school district studied in this research was one of the original 10 school districts in British Columbia to implement the BC SWIS program in 2007 (FERENCE Weicker & Company, 2007, 2008). As such, this school district provided an opportunity to represent a district that has a rich history in settlement work in the province and a unique delivery model of the SWIS program that implements a centralized service through its Welcome Centre where all newcomers with children must connect to the school district upon arrival in their new community. This centralized approach enables a

unified assessment process whereby all newcomer students are assessed to determine the language supports required, eligibility for ELL services, and the extent and range of ELL services needed, which is articulated to the host schools. This district provides a holistic language assessment looking at both receptive English (listening and reading) and expressive English (speaking and writing) (source: district promotional materials). At this initial point of contact with the school district families are connected with a SWIS worker, in most cases one who shares the same cultural background and language, to begin the process of assisting newcomers in the settlement process. This district is committed to assisting ELL students and their families navigate the many challenges as they integrate into the school system and community at large. There is an initial commitment of one full year of support, yet based on student and family needs this may be reviewed and extended.

This district also has a diverse student population and by extension a strong ethnic representation within this urban area. This urban area is one of the fastest growing communities through immigration. The following Figure 1.1 indicates the diversity of languages spoken in this particular school district. While direct statistics on ethnic composition are not available, this diversity of languages spoken serves as a proxy for the many different ethnic communities that SWIS workers serve. The SWIS workers in this study, however, worked with refugee populations, which are typically not represented within these larger language groupings.

Figure 1.1. Languages Spoken in the School District Studied



The ethnic composition is diverse in British Columbia and will continue to be so in the future. Immigration is currently the main reason for population growth in British Columbia. Between 2006 and 2011 international migration accounted for 66% of the population growth. Newcomer arrivals have a definite impact on the population; therefore, how we settle and integrate this large percentage of the population into the host community and schools certainly attests to the relevance of the SWIS program. This school district has a demonstrable increase in the total number of languages other than English spoken at home as well as a steady increase in languages spoken in this district and community. During the time of this research this school district experienced an overall increase in student enrolment, of which immigration was a major contributing factor.

1.6. Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following definitions will be used.

Integration: Integration may be defined as a process whereby the immigrant or immigrant group becomes an active member of a host society, yet simultaneously maintains a distinct ethnic identity. Kymlicka (1998) offers a circumscribed definition of integration as:

The extent to which immigrants and their descendants integrate into an existing societal culture and come to view their life-chances as tied up with participation in the range of social institutions, based on a common language, which define the societal culture. (p. 28)

After all, the literal meaning of integration is the combining and coordinating of different elements.

Multiculturalism: Throughout this paper the term multiculturalism is used as an umbrella term covering a range of policies and discussion around recognition and support of all individual rights guaranteed in a liberal-democratic state and the rights to express and maintain individual identities and practices provided they do not violate the general rights and freedoms as expected within a state.

Pre-settlement: The term pre-settlement (post-arrival) is used to describe the starting point for some of the refugee families who have arrived in Canada with very few transferable skills, who may be illiterate in their country of origin, and have limited prior experiences to assist in understanding their new environment. The term pre-settlement refers to the early stages of arrival to a host country, and does not imply pre-arrival preparation for immigration. This is a critical concept resulting from this research and is discussed in depth in Chapter 6.

Refugee: For the purpose of this study the definition outlined through the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Geneva Protocol will be used:

A refugee, according to the Convention, is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. (UNHCR, n.d., p. 3)

Settlement: The term settlement is distinct from integration as it is focused on the immediate needs, both physical and emotional, of newcomers upon arrival to a new country. The Canadian Federal Government defines settlement as the first three years in the host country (WelcomeBC.ca).

1.7. Chapter Summaries

This first chapter intended to provide the reader with an understanding of the research purpose and question, context and significance of the study and key definitions that will be used throughout the paper. This initial chapter connected the relevance of this research to the current movement in the field of immigration and settlement. It is important to understand how Canada has arrived to the point where a program such as SWIS is considered and implemented, thus it is necessary to have a brief section on the background and historical information required to fully appreciate the evolution of this program.

Chapter 2 of this study presents an historical overview of immigration and settlement to embed the SWIS program in its historical context leading to a more specific overview of the current demographic of British Columbia, and the large urban school district within which this particular SWIS program operates. This chapter also emphasizes the many differences in the level of support offered to refugees in comparison to mainstream immigrants. This chapter includes a brief overview of the origins of the SWIS program and the current program model in this particular school district.

The literature review, Chapter 3, will explore the theoretical concepts and background that are part of the daily role of the SWIS. This role is grounded in concepts of cultural mediation, insider perspective, identity and Charles Taylor's construct of social imaginaries. The role of SWIS workers is also routed in concepts of settlement, integration, diversity and multiculturalism, which are most certainly germane to this topic

Chapter 4 will demonstrate how the central question lends itself to a case study research design. A qualitative case study was employed using both surveys as well as semi-structured interviews with a carefully selected cross section of SWIS workers. To

accomplish this, an initial survey was administered to all SWIS workers currently employed by this school district. This initial survey provided the researcher with a sample selection of SWIS workers who have worked with refugee students and their families and expressed a willingness to continue in this research project through their participation in a subsequent interview. The goal of this research design is to extrapolate the shared and unique experience of the SWIS workers within the context of the program as intended by the Ministry and school districts.

Chapter 5 presents the culmination of the data collected during the survey and the interview process. An overview of the research participants is presented along with summary graphs, matrixes, and summative narratives to best express the findings. The four themes that emerged as a result of the data will be presented in this chapter. This chapter presents and analyzes the key findings of the research. The four themes will be discussed in detail as will the findings based upon SWIS worker responses in regard to the five Ministry-intended outcomes. The chapter concludes with recommendations resulting from the research as well as suggesting future areas of research to be explored. Finally an overall conclusion is presented with the intent to connect all areas of the study back to the guiding question and sub-questions.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by discussing the findings, drawing conclusions and making recommendations for program review and further areas study. In addition to the four themes presented in Chapter 5, the concept of pre-settlement and how this stage is fraught with many barriers will be discussed. The concept of a pre-settlement to integration continuum will be explored through discussion around the settlement continuum and a completed taxonomy of integration with a full expression of the pre-settlement stage.

Chapter 2.

Historical Background

2.1. Introduction

This section intends to provide an historical background of immigration and settlement to demonstrate the progressive nature of immigration sentiment and policy that has resulted in the current management of immigration in Canada. The SWIS program exists for a reason. It was developed and implemented based on a strong desire to improve immigrant reception and a clear recognition that support programs during the initial stages of arrival in the host country will result in better long-term success for immigrants. Historically Canadian immigration policy has shifted from a widely open-door policy to one of careful selection. As Canada has had a dynamic perspective on immigration since the early 1900s, it is important to provide a brief overview of immigration in Canada moving through its evolution to the current outlook. Migration has become increasingly controlled over the years, as Freda Hawkins (1988) indicates, “This era of free migration has vanished altogether” (p. 4). Controlled migration in this instance refers to a concerted effort by governments to base the immigration intake on the economic needs of the country, as current immigration policies are impacted by past practices and future outlooks, thus it is important to highlight some of the major shifts in national sentiment and/or government direction. This is a vast topic in which only relevant changes in immigration practices will be outlined in this chapter. As this research is focussed mainly on refugee populations it is also critical to provide a basic background of the waves of refugees Canada has received and how these various waves demonstrated shifts in policy and sentiment around refugee intake. Additionally refugee policy has had its own unique evolution and will be discussed in this chapter. The information in this section provides an appropriate historical perspective to assist in understanding the need for a program focussed on settlement and how the mandate of the SWIS program responds to current immigration concerns. As well, the SWIS

program has its own history with an earlier origin beginning outside of this school district and will be included as part of this section.

2.2. Historical Overview of Immigration in Canada

Canada is built on immigration and continues to facilitate new immigration as a means for economic development, population growth, and for humanitarian reasons. Immigration is a vast topic and much larger than the scope of this paper; however, in order to understand how an immigrant-receiving country such as Canada has evolved as a host country with concerns around settlement, integration, and the role the host country plays as a recipient it is important to have a general sense of the historical overview of immigration in Canada. For this purpose I have chosen to focus the timeframe from 19th Century to the current day as definite immigrant waves have occurred during this time and this timeframe demonstrates a beginning of a new and more focussed view and enactment of immigration. Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock (2000) suggest that:

Following Confederation, immigration policy was regarded as one of the cornerstones upon which the new nation would develop. For Canada to survive as an independent, prosperous nation economic growth was essential and, in turn, was dependent upon a larger population and expanding market. (p. 13)

This statement speaks to the need and decision to formalize a concerted plan or strategy for populating Canada through the mechanism of immigration. Carefully planned immigration benefits the newcomer as well as the host country. If strategic systems or programs that foster successful transition for the newcomer are in place, there is a decreased likelihood that immigrants place a strain on the economy of the host country. Immigration policy and planning continue to be an important discussion both federally and provincially. The SWIS program is a result of such discussions.

Immigration waves, prior to the second great wave, which can be viewed as immigration from 1990s to the present (Reitz, 2002), occurred during the late 19th Century and into the early part of the 20th Century. Immigrants at this time were primarily of European descent and many were in Canada fleeing hardships from their country of origin or simply starting a new life. Canada's first immigration act, the

Immigration Act, 1869, formally supported an open-door policy to all newcomers; however, in reality the Agricultural Department, which undertook much of the immigration promotion on behalf of the federal government, favored white farmers and laborers from Britain, the United States, and Northern Europe with the concept of nation-building and constitution-making projects in mind (Hawkins, 1988). At the time of Confederation only 8% of the 3.1 million people in Canada were of non-English or non-French origin (Palmer, 1991). As stated by Kelley and Trebilcock (2000):

Between 1896-1914, more than three million people emigrated to Canada (many from central and southern Europe) and dramatic growth was experienced in agriculture, manufacturing, and service industries. (p. 14)

The number of non-British and non-French immigrants slowly changed in proportion to the overall population as Canada began opening its borders to other countries. During the early part of the 19th Century there was a surge of central and eastern European newcomers who typically settled in the prairie provinces: Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000). Further, from 1896-1914 the overall population of Canada escalated by 43%, of which 22% were foreign-born. As noted by Palmer (1991), in 1911, “people of non-British or non-French origin formed 24 percent of the population of Manitoba, 40 percent of the population of Saskatchewan and 33 percent of Alberta” (p. 23). Arrivals peaked in 1913 when Canada received approximately 400,870 new immigrants (Hawkins, 1988). According to Hawkins (1988), “The last movement of immigrants to Canada of any size occurred in 1930 (104,806) and the last very substantial movement in the peak year of 1913 (400,870)” (p. 80). Current predictions suggest that by 2031 at least one in four Canadians will be from another country; this is the highest percentage since Confederation; indeed, the next great movement.

The Great Depression, 1929-1939, saw a rapid decline in immigration to Canada. Demographic changes based on decreased birth rates and immigration revealed an index of hardship shaped across the country during this time. Both immigration and birth rates plummeted throughout the 1930s reaching the lowest point since the 1880s. The situation in the urban centers worsened with high unemployment resulting in a large migration of the population re-locating to rural areas as, “‘going back to the land’ was preferable to a miserable existence on urban relief” (Great depression, “Impact on population,” para. 2). It wasn’t until the 1960s that these numbers began to truly turn

around. This trend of declining immigration continued during the war years with no real apparent rebound until the 1950s. Ottawa's restrictive legislation reflected the general Canadian attitude towards immigration, for Canadians across the country took the view that immigrants threatened scarce jobs in an economy that in 1933 saw almost one quarter of the labour force unemployed (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000). Prospective immigrants as well as immigrants already established in Canada became the targets of opposition. In general the period of the Great Depression was a time when economic concerns were paramount and for many immigration was a threat to an already weakened economy. Not only were mainstream immigrants scrutinized during the Great Depression, Canada did not demonstrate a welcoming reception to refugees.

The immigration trend occurring during the post-World War II timeframe marks a significant shift in Canadian history in the 'quality' of the immigrant population, which meant less of an open-door policy to an increased awareness of matching immigrants to economic needs. Accordingly noted by Kelley and Trebilcock (2000):

The most striking feature of the post-war period in international migration has been its political character. Since 1945 governments have promoted and regulated migration in an increasingly determined fashion. (p. 3)

This period saw a major change in assessing the needs of Canadian demographics with a shifting focus from nation building to filling labour deficiencies with highly-skilled trained labour. As immigration needs were changing after WWII it was important to begin formalizing Canadian attitudes toward immigration. In 1946 a Standing Committee of the Senate on Immigration and Labour was appointed (Hawkins, 1988). Through the proceedings of this committee some of the most revealing information regarding attitudes towards immigration arose and, further, according to Hawkins, "an examination, for the first time of some of the principle issues and problems which immigration presents as an important sector of Canadian public policy" (p. 82). The committee, as a whole, agreed on the need for continued immigration, but one key area where the committee differed was the concept of absorption. Most on the committee maintained that, "Admissions should not exceed the number which can be absorbed from time to time without creating conditions of unemployment, reducing the standard of living or otherwise endangering the Canadian economy" (p. 84). In contrast, some on the committee believed in the 'millions theory', which essentially translated to Canada

accepting as many immigrants as possible and minimizing issues of emigration from Canada to the United States. One side of the argument noted that Canada had taken in more immigrants than could be absorbed and that the surplus had gone to the United States (Hawkins, 1988). Part of this problem was that no one could articulate precisely the absorption capacity of Canada. According to Hawkins, “This difference of opinion was not resolved and the problem of measuring absorption capacity was not explored” (p. 84). As indicated by Hawkins it is crucial to note that the Committee clearly stated that, “there should be no discrimination based on race or religion” (p. 84), a point substantiated by the committee’s commitment for the *Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, 1943*. Particularly relevant to this study is the Committee’s recommendation that Canada begin to focus more concerted on questions of assimilation and citizenship. Hawkins (1988) noted that part of the role of this commitment was to see, “a strengthening of the work of the Citizenship Branch particularly in provision of educational material and liaison work” (p. 85). The committee recommended closer coordination between federal departments in order to provide more collaborative leadership to the many public and private agencies. Among the recommendations were suggestions of establishing an interdepartmental coordinating committee (Hawkins, 1988). Overall, the committee reported that Canadians in general welcomed immigration; however, the major concern noted was the fear of a negative impact on the economy—a point well understood considering the Great Depression was a recent memory for many. As well, the relatively easy flow of immigration in the past was now examined as being a threat to social harmony, and at this point a shift from “attracting potential settlers to one directed at selecting the most desirable future members of the country” (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000, p. 248). This committee demonstrated a clear effort toward facilitating much needed discussion on immigration and careful planning and policy building to manage immigration.

The effort of the committee appears to be in response to earlier public-policy priorities as noted by Kelley and Trebilcock (2000):

During the 1930s and continuing throughout the Second World War, immigration policy receded to the periphery of public-policy priorities, reflecting the enormous shift in attitudes towards immigration that had occurred over the previous thirty years. (pp. 247-248)

Perhaps this was an impetus for a more concentrated and focussed effort on immigration. Early in the century immigration was regarded as essential to the prosperity of the nation with three million immigrants being admitted to Canada in the first 15 years of the century (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000). However, economic downturn and the onset of the First World War saw a reduction in immigration with only half the number of immigrants arriving as had arrived in the first 15 years of the century.

The post-war recovery saw a tentative attitude on immigration. Concerns and anticipation around a full economic recovery prompted a continuation of a less conservative immigration policy. This period was on the heels of what Kelley and Trebilcock (2000) refer to as the ‘blackest cloud” in Canadian history. They state that:

If the period between 1930 and 1945 can accurately be described as the blackest cloud in Canadian immigration history, then its silver lining was undoubtedly the changes that such excesses eventually provoked.
(p. 256)

This so-called black cloud was in reference to some of the injustices of the immigration policies and practices of the day as demonstrated by the forced relocation of almost the entire Japanese population in Canada as well as the exclusion of Jewish refugees at a time of mass extermination from Germany and German-occupied Europe. The Great Depression had left a high level of unemployment and an apparent need to restrict admission to Canada along with a plan for deportation of immigrants who were seen, at the time, as a burden on the economy and unemployment rates. Thus the post-war recovery stage in immigration history marked a shift from highly regulated and discretionary decision-making on admittance to more of a humanitarian and liberal attitude informed in part by an examination of how Canada treated certain ethnic groups during the war years. At this time there was a shift in how citizens felt about immigration with a change in direction to a more radical left viewpoint, which insisted on respect for individual liberties. This was definitely prompted by reflection of Canada’s treatment of certain immigrant groups and how this treatment did not align with Canadian values; in fact, according to Kelley and Trebilcock (2000):

The blatant denial of admission, citizenship, or residence to those of races and political leanings at odds with the Anglo-Canadian norm came to be seen in later years as entirely inappropriate, given the implications

of notions of racial superiority exemplified so grotesquely by the Nazis.
(p. 256)

Canada's treatment of certain groups was viewed as being contrary to the values fought for during the war.

This 'darkest cloud' paved the way for a change focusing on immigrant reception. For most immigrant-receiving countries immigration was specifically related to labour needs. During this same period of time after WWII there was more communication and attention to migration between sending and receiving countries. Hawkins (1988) claims that:

This interchange between sending and receiving countries, limited though it may be, is part of a whole network of communication and pressures on governments, which has had a powerful influence on the nature, volume, and directions of international migration in the post-war era. (p. 5)

Notably, Italy, for example, played an active and vested role in ensuring their ex-patriots were being treated fairly in their receiving country (Hawkins, 1988). Between 1952 and the enactment of the new *Immigration Act* of 1965 special acts were provided for the admission of large numbers of relatives (Hawkins, 1988). This great flow of relatives saw Canada admit over three million immigrants since the end of WWII with more than a million sponsored by relatives or family connections in Canada (Hawkins, 1988). In 1959 there was much debate in The House of Commons around suggestions of restricting the number of relatives pouring into the country. Much opposition to this by ethnic groups, political parties defending their ethnic constituents, and other special interest groups, resulted in the order-in-council being rescinded. Although the order was rescinded the debate remained active. Family-sponsored immigrants were by and large unskilled with a potential negative impact on Canadian society. As noted by Hawkins (1988):

The Honourable Hubert Opperman, the Minister of State for Immigration at the time, stated "no annual quota was contemplated, but the number of people entering would be controlled by careful assessment of the individual's qualifications and the basic aim of preserving a homogeneous population will be maintained. (p. 13)

During the Postwar Boom (1946-1962) two prevailing trends had a strong impact on immigration policy. First off there was an economic boom that lasted right up to the 1970s. The Postwar Boom was a time of economic growth, improved employment, strong Gross National Product, consumer demand, and an overall increase in the Canadian population. A second key factor influencing Canada's immigration policy at the time was Canada's active international involvement in the building of the United Nations (UN) and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Admission (UNHCR) as well as its participation in the granting of independence to India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, and Israel. According to Kelley and Trebilcock (2000), "Canada's increasingly active participation in world affairs led politicians, interest groups, and the general public to favour a selectively more open immigration policy" (p. 312). Immigration policy at this time was directed at selecting skilled labourers and professionals rather than agricultural workers. Finally, this postwar period saw a change in the demographic of immigration.

The replacement of the White Canada Policy in 1962 significantly changed the ethnic composition of Canada (Hawkins, 1988). Prior to this policy change immigration was not easily accessible to non-European immigrants. An example is that prior to 1945, the admissible classes of immigration were restricted by a 1931 Privy Council order stating that those admissible to Canada include:

1. British subjects as defined in P.C. (Privy Council) 1923-183-
'British by reason of birth or naturalization in Great Britain,
Newfoundland, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa'
2. U.S. citizens;
3. The wives and unmarried children under eighteen and fiancé (e) of
legal residents of Canada;
4. Agriculturalists having sufficient means to farm in Canada.
(as cited in Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000, p. 320)

Immigration intake was starting to become a more formalized process during the post-war era. According to Kelley and Trebilcock (2000) there was an increased need in immigration, and, the period 1946 – 1962 saw an increase in immigration:

Over the sixteen-year period between 1946 and 1962, the total intake of immigrants was 2,151,505, averaging 126,559 on an annual basis (although most 160,000 between 1951 and 1960)—almost as many as in the large immigrant waves of the first decade of this century and the 1920s. (p. 313)

Immigration during this time placed an emphasis on skilled workers and professionals. There was also a change in the immigrant demographic. According to Hawkins, “During the period 1950-1955, immigration accounted for two-thirds of the total labour force increase and for almost half the total increase during the whole of that decade” (p. 41). A new Immigration Act was passed in 1952 setting out new requirements for admission into Canada (Hawkins, 1988). Attention to the admission process prompted an increased public awareness on the importance of admission criteria as well as the recognition of the rights of immigrants. Admission to Canada that discriminated based on race or country of origin was, for the most part, eliminated by 1962. Major changes through this post-war period were significant and included: the passage of the Canadian *Citizenship Act* 1946, the implementation of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in 1950, and the enactment of the new *Immigration Act* in 1952 (as cited in Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000). As a result there was now more of a formalized and more clearly outlined approach to immigration. This post-war era marked a new direction in immigration policy. Admission requirements were now concerned with the attributes of the immigrant as opposed to a former selection based on race or country of origin. The post-war era marked a time in immigration policy whereby a much more liberal admission policy and sentiment were favored and paved the way for the next stages of immigration policy.

The 1990s and beyond saw a shift in direction that currently impacts the way we manage immigration in Canada. Part of this shift has been a deliberate effort to ascertain information on successful integration over time rather than focusing on the immediate needs of the current labour market. It is one thing to identify economic and labour needs, but it is an entirely different thing to follow up on the actual immigrant adjustment to the labour force, economic outcomes, and integration in general. The long-term consideration of immigrant adjustment may indeed attest to a shifting view concerning immigration, settlement, and integration that now considers the role of the host country as a critical piece in the reception of immigrants as opposed to the previous perception that it is the immigrant who must adjust to Canadian culture. Some specific areas of concern have emerged in examination of recent immigrant intake and labour market adjustments, accordingly Picot and Sweetman (2012) suggest eight key factors predicating required change in immigration recruitment and retention:

- deterioration of economic outcomes for new immigrants;

- occupational and labour shortages;
- immigrations levels and the business cycles;
- regional distribution of immigrant settlement;
- economic outcomes of the children of immigrants;
- application backlog;
- immigration levels;
- and finally the impact of immigration well-being on the economic well-being of Canadians. (pp. 4-5)

These eight factors are important because they suggest areas that warrant improvement when considering immigrant settlement and integration. The deterioration of economic outcomes is unfortunately a fact in Canada (Picot & Sweetman, 2012). For many immigrants the economic reality does not fit their earlier expectation for a Canadian lifestyle. As well, employment needs to be accessible based on occupational and labour shortages otherwise immigrants may not be able to find the employment they were led to believe existed. Immigration levels need to align with business cycles and trends for a better match of skills. Canada is currently considering ways to encourage immigration to locations outside of large urban centres areas rather than enabling and fostering concentrated populations in urban centres. The immigration application backlog remains a concern in Canada. Current policy changes have been made to address these issues. And, as noted as the eighth factor, improving immigrant recruitment and retention in most countries needs to ensure there is harmony between the immigrant and the host community. These factors as outlined by Picot and Sweetman indicate that Canada may not be servicing the long-term needs of immigrants and their families. Picot and Sweetman go on to explain that, “there is little Canadian research regarding the economic impacts of immigration on the economy, which limits informed discussion of this aspect of the issue” (p. 3). That said, Picot and Sweetman continue to examine ways that past immigration policy may have impacted negative economic outcomes on immigration. The eight identified areas noted above are viewed by the authors as areas that may inform policy changes in the future with ‘deterioration in economic outcomes of new immigrants’ noted as the major (economic) driver of change. This is relevant to this study as policy changes are beginning to re-examine the economic impact of immigration. Thus, a program designed to facilitate integration of newcomers may be viewed as part of this “change” as it looks at facing immigration challenges at the foundational level experienced by the initial phase of arrival to Canada.

Part of the mandate for Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC, 2012b) is to “build a stronger Canada by” adhering to its mission:

- facilitate the arrival of people and their integration into Canada in a way that maximizes their contribution to the country while protecting the health, safety and security of Canadians;
- maintain Canada’s humanitarian tradition by protecting refugees and people in need of protection;
- enhance the values and promote the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship; and
- reach out to all Canadians and foster increased intercultural understanding and an integrated society with equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, ethnicity and religion.
- advancing global migration policies in a way that supports Canada’s immigration and humanitarian objectives

(CIC, 2012b, “Mission”)

In response to issues that emerged from the 1980s and 1990s, changes in the early 1990s made by CIC focused on the immigration selection process by increasing the desired average educational level among immigrants, increasing those admitted through the economic class, and raising the number of Information and Technology (IT) workers and engineers coming to Canada (Picot & Sweetman, 2012). In addition to these selection criteria were some noteworthy changes to Canada’s immigrant selection system. Picot and Sweetman in their study note the following six:

1. The introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2002);
2. The expansion and development of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP);
3. The introduction of the Canadian Experience Class;
4. The inception of the Provincial Nominee Program;
5. Changes in language instructions (2008) controlling the number of immigrants entering Canada in particular occupations and to
6. Reduce application backlog.

(Picot & Sweetman, 2012, p. 19)

This shift is potentially a much ‘tighter’ system as indicated by a recent—fall 2011—issuing by Citizenship Immigration Canada (CIC) of four sets of instructions that have a

significant impact on immigration policy. Mostly directed at the Foreign Skilled Worker Program the following four initiatives are:

1. Occupation is now an element of selection and a preliminary screen.
In fact,
2. Unless potential immigrants have Canadian job offers for jobs in demand new applicants may not be eligible for immigration application,
3. There is no fixed timetable to update the list for approved occupations, thus, indicating a departure from short-term needs to perhaps more long-term planning,
4. Due to the demand of applicants, likely due to assumed employment, CIC has now introduced caps or quotas per category with the process based on first-come-first-serve basis.

(CIC, 2012b)

This set of “instructions” attests to a more focussed and deliberate matching of immigrants to the required skills and occupational needs of the country. Although no direct impact to the SWIS program is anticipated, in particular in relation to refugee populations who fall for the most part outside of the Foreign Skilled Worker Program, these new directions are included here nonetheless to complete the historical summary of immigration to Canada and also to demonstrate how quickly immigration shifts can occur and how they can be impacted by different variables and by no means indicates a desirous or complete answer to immigration policy. In fact, Picot and Sweetman (2012) note that:

This does not mean that Canada has achieved the optimal policy orientation. In particular, immigrant economic outcomes remain an area of concern in Canada as well as in most Western immigrant-receiving countries. Relative to those of the Canadian-born, the earnings levels of recent immigrants remain far below levels among those entering before the 1990s. (p. 21)

Positive economic outcomes are critical for the long-term success of immigrant integration. Although room for improvement, these directions and initiatives suggest a concerted and strategic approach focussing on the well-being of both the immigrant and the host country. Shifts in thinking or direction do not occur immediately but rather move slowly in the direction of the current views on immigration.

A recent announcement by the Canadian Minister of Immigration, Jason Kenney, noted that Canada will now open up a new queue for skilled worker immigrants, which is just one of other immigration reforms announced in Toronto in March 2012. According to a recent article in *The Vancouver Sun* newspaper the Minister of Immigration indicated this move is aimed at better matching foreign-trained professionals with jobs here in Canada and reducing the time it takes to process their applications (Cohen, 2012). This move is consistent with several other initiatives recently introduced by the Canadian Federal Government, such as adjusting the points system for Federal Skilled Worker Program,³ and assessing foreign credentials. The current government seeks to create a “job bank of qualified foreign workers” to assist with projected shortages, in particular in the skilled worker areas (*Calgary Herald*, 2012). This new system intends to provide an improved system for matching foreign workers with established businesses in Canada. Amongst changes to immigration selection and recruitment there has also been a recent announcement by the Government of Canada, April 12, 2012, that the Canadian Federal government will be centralizing settlement services and terminating the Canada-BC Immigration Agreement (Government of Canada, 2012). What this initiative suggests is that the government is concerned with regional inequities of immigrant disbursement and immigrant access to services, meaning that immigrant services should be available in an equitable manner regardless of where the immigrant has settled. According to a press release posted by CHLY News “CIC states that the change is being made to ensure there are comparable services for immigrants in each province and territory” (Radio Malaspina Society, 2012, para. 3). A *Vancouver Sun* report noted:

We’re ending it [Thursday] because we think that the integration services are about nation-building and we want to make sure that every region gets its fair share of funding and that immigrants across the country get consistent services regardless of where they live” a government source said on condition of anonymity. (Cohen, 2012, para. 3)

According to this article the Federal Government boasts this initiative as having no negative financial impact on the two provinces—British Columbia and Manitoba—both of whom will see agreements cancelled between the provinces and the Federal

³ http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/foreign_workers/higher_skilled/arranged_offer/index.shtml

government that allow them to manage their own language and settlement programs. This direction seems to support movements in immigration such as better disbursement of immigrants, and it is likely driven by economic efficiencies, yet there appears to be tension between this mandate of the federal government and the autonomy of provincial settlement services. This initiative was not well received by all. Some agencies that support newcomers are not clear at this point how this move may impact them, if at all. There is concern around re-locating and centralizing services to one main headquarter to service four provinces and one territory: BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Yukon. The concern is that centralizing to one so-called “super region” as named by the federal government may extend the administration of settlement programs too far from the areas that are highly concentrated with immigrants. The concept of super regions, as boasted by CIC, is that these so-called super regions will create a main headquarters, which is intended to operate in the West and will be based out of Calgary. According to Lynn Moran, Executive Director, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC (AMSSA):

BC has reached its status of immigrant service excellence through strong collaborative connections between government, communities, service providers, businesses, and other BC stakeholders. It is hard to imagine how those connections will continue under this new CIC mega-regions structure controlled from Calgary and Ottawa. (Radio Malaspina Society, 2012, para. 7)

The other super regions will be based out of Ontario and Quebec. In the case of Quebec full jurisdiction over the settlement process remains within this province. Prior to this announcement administration of settlement programs was managed in a localized fashion, particularly in large urban areas with large and growing populations of immigrants.

The recent announcement of centralizing settlement services speaks to the level of attention placed on the settlement stream of immigration. A decision such as this one certainly attests to the dialogue that is occurring around this important aspect of immigration and settlement. Coinciding with this change, and of particular interest relating to the findings of this study, is the new program initiative for Vulnerable Immigrant Population (VIP). This program will offer language and skill development to prepare immigrants, which will most likely include refugees, for the process of

settlement. This is encouraging undoubtedly and will assist to service the needs of immigrants who require an initial stage in preparation for settlement. This program is indeed complementary to the SWIS program, and is, if accessible to the school districts that have SWIS programs, an appropriate service for SWIS to direct refugee families.

A further concern confronting Canadian Immigration and Citizenship is recognition that the proverbial cab driver with a PhD from another country still exists at some level in Canada and continues to be a federal concern and ongoing focus of the government. In a 2011 report, “Strengthening Canada’s Economy—Government of Canada Progress Report 2011 on Foreign Credential Recognition” authored by the CIC (2012a) it is stated that:

Foreign Credential Recognition will remain a priority for the Government of Canada as we pursue our efforts to attract and retain the best and the brightest in our country. With a focus on strengthening the Canadian economy and its competitiveness, the quick and seamless integration of newcomers into the labour market will remain critical to meeting our current and future needs. (“Conclusion”, para. 1)

The report goes on to indicate and highlight several key initiatives recommended with four principles guiding the process: fairness, transparency, timeliness, and consistency. The Pan-Canadian Framework for the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications is a commitment by federal and provincial and territorial governments to collaborate to ensure that regulatory avenues are in place to assure that the four principles are adhered to during the Foreign Credentialing Regulation process.

As presented in this section it is important to understand that immigration sentiment and policy have shifted and evolved over time and continue to do so. Determining admission criteria to a country is a complex process, and it generally mirrors the economic conditions of the country as well as the anticipated economic outcomes for the immigrant population post immigration. Attention to topics such as the economic outcomes of immigrants, the 2-way process of immigration, early settlement stages, and foreign credentialing brings these areas into the policy arena where positive impacts can be achieved. The SWIS program’s objectives to ensure the settlement process is as smooth as possible for immigrant students and their families provides a unique opportunity, at this current time, to move in a direction that supports the current shifts in immigration policy. The above section presented a brief overview of Canada’s

immigration sentiments, directions, and policies; however, as this research is primarily focused on the refugee population this next section will provide a backdrop of understanding of refugee history and current directions in Canada.

2.3. Refugee History in Canada

This study focussed specifically on the refugee population in a large urban school district as a means of exploring how the SWIS program impacts one of the most vulnerable populations in our country. Refugees provide a unique lens to view the SWIS program and, as indicated in the introduction, an iteration of the litmus test used for gauging social justice in our community. Canada has had much experience as a refugee-receiving country. Over time the various reasons for accepting particular refugee groups has shifted. These 'waves' of refugee migration will be examined in this section; however, it is necessary to first highlight the accepted definition of refugee and to understand the current categories for refugees used in Canada. The following definitions are noted:

The Geneva Convention offers the standard definition of refugee:

A refugee, according to the Convention, is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. (UNHCR, n.d., p. 3)

In Canada there are different categories of refugees. Canada does make a preliminary distinction between those who Canada has identified as a refugee under the Geneva Convention definition and those who arrive in Canada and claim to be refugees. For the latter group they await a determining hearing to see if they qualify under the definition. The following Table 2.1 defines the categories for refugee status in Canada.

Table 2.1. Refugee Category

Subcategory	Description
Government Assisted Refugees	Enter Canada as permanent residents and are supported by the federal government for up to one year from their arrival in Canada.
Privately Sponsored Refugees	Enter Canada as permanent residents and are sponsored by private citizens. Private sponsors commit to assisting and supporting these individuals throughout their first year of residence in Canada.
Refugee Dependents Abroad	Dependents (living abroad) of permanent resident refugees landed in Canada.
Asylum Refugees (includes private sponsorship, self-funded, and refugee claimants)	People in refugee-like situation who seek asylum in Canada because they cannot safely return to their home country.

Note. Data from CIC, 2012a.

As stated by CIC (n.d.) Canada is recognized around the world for its leadership in offering safe haven to people who need refugee protection” (para. 3). How Canada gained this recognition will be explored briefly in this next section. In Canada refugees have a unique history that can be viewed in terms of waves. Refugees are a specific immigrant population that have typically faced tremendous stresses and emotional and physical challenges beyond those experienced for whom immigration was a choice. It is crucial for refugee-hosting countries to provide clear policies and processes to support this vulnerable population. Unfortunately for many refugees the services provided for mainstream immigrants are not accessible to refugees. The next section presents a brief history of who Canada has accepted as refugees and what our current policy is in this regard and how our response to refugee crises reflect our politics will be presented.

Canada does not have as long a history of refugee acceptance as it does immigrant resettlement. In fact, Canada’s refugee policies and practices are relatively recent; Howard Adelman (1991) writes about 6 decades of refugee history with a dividing distinction between two major periods: first when Canadian policy was Euro-centred followed by a shift to world-centred. Generally, refugee intake has moved through periods whereby waves of particular groups have been accepted and can be viewed as a reflection of Canadian policy, economy, and ideology. Canada’s history has not always been welcoming. During the period of 1933-1947 Canada did not accept as many Jewish refugees as did the United States, France, and the United Kingdom—in fact, admitting only 5,000 (Adelman, 1991). Although not as large as subsequent waves, the Jewish refugee intake marks one of the first in Canada, and nonetheless begins the

discussion and understanding of Canada's history as a refugee-receiving country. During the backdrop of The Cold War Canada's admission of refugees was aimed at those from Europe. Refugees from North Africa, Middle East, and Asia were not considered and were viewed as temporary people fleeing persecution and not candidates for resettlement (Adelman, 1991). Other examples follow that demonstrate waves of refugee intake accepted into Canada in a more welcoming manner. This section is not inclusive of all refugee waves, but is intended to highlight some of the most relevant refugee waves in Canadian history.

The Hungarian crisis in 1956 marks Canada's first wholehearted response to a refugee crisis. This crisis was a response to the Politburo move to crush the revolution although they had earlier announced a willingness to negotiate a withdrawal of Soviet forces. A Soviet force invaded Budapest and other areas of the country; this force was met with resistance and a subsequent killing of over 2,500 Hungarians. As a result of this conflict 200,000 Hungarian refugees fled the country. At this time Canada accepted more than 37,000 Hungarian refugees. At the time there was no formalized system in place, but rather an ad hoc approach to the crisis (Adelman, 1991; Hawkins, 1988). For some the immediate response and openness exhibited by Canada was viewed as a Liberal immigration movement (Hawkins, 1988). Hawkins suggests:

The Hungarian crisis of November 1956, which by the end of December 1958 brought 37,566 immigrants to Canada, awoke the nobler instincts of the Liberal government. It was a perfect liberal cause and they responded swiftly to it. (p. 114)

This crisis provided Canada an opportunity to demonstrate how quickly and efficiently it could respond to such a large volume of refugees seeking asylum to Canada. Also noted by Hawkins (1988) was that the Hungarian crisis prompted extensive and successful planning and management on the part of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and a close coordination between the Department and the provinces. As noted by Hawkins:

A remarkable feature of the whole Hungarian movement was the extent to which it prompted vigorous and successful planning and management on the part of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, close collaboration with the provinces, and considerable community involvement. (p. 115)

Further, Hawkins (1988) notes, "For a brief period of time, the House of Commons was united on this dramatic issue" (p. 115). This close coordination, however, lost its momentum and immigration officials began to decrease the leadership role they had taken during the crisis. The Hungarian crisis created what Hawkins (1988) notes as a "breakthrough in Canadian immigration management from 1957 onwards" (p. 117), yet the gains made were allowed to slip away due to a petering out of funds, churches beginning to go their own way, and an overall loss of leadership of immigration officials. For Hawkins, this was a lost opportunity to continue with a proactive refugee-reception model. This was a result of the loss of momentum and diminishing funds for the committee that had been established to help in the initial reception and integration of the Hungarian refugees, and churches that had been very active during the crises and were now beginning to go their own way (Hawkins, 1988).

Following the Hungarian Crisis the next wave of refugees was the diaspora from Czechoslovakia. What was markedly different from this wave was not the volume of intake, but rather a difference in the leadership of Canada in regard to refugee reception at that time. This wave of refugees marked a closer correspondence between immigrant/refugee admissions and occupational demands. The immediate and efficient planning of the government exhibited through the Hungarian refugee movement had lost its momentum. The Czechoslovakian crisis, prompted by a Soviet invasion in Czechoslovakia in 1968, found Canada accepting refugees based on humanitarian reasons, yet these reasons can be seen as self-serving to the needs of the nation with deliberate admissions planning by the government. The Czechoslovakians admitted were predominately young, well-educated, and mostly exhibiting technical and professional skills (Adelman, 1991). By the end of 1969, 12,000 Czechoslovakian refugees had arrived most of whom were highly-skilled trades people or professionals.

In 1952 Canada signed the Geneva Convention on Refugees followed by its protocol in 1967 (UNHCR, n.d.). This ensured that Canada now had an obligation to refugees based on the international law and convention (Adelman, 1991). Prior to 1967, Canada had passed its first *Immigration Act* intent on ensuring non-discrimination of immigrants and refugees. Following these advancements were other waves of refugees. By the end of 1972 Canada had received more than 7,000 Ugandan refugees. According to Adelman, at that time Canada displayed a preference for accepting highly qualified Ugandans as a result of its quick response to the crisis. In this situation,

Adelman also notes, "Humanitarianism and self-interest had been congruent" (1991, p.194). The major criticism of the Ugandan refugee crisis and Canada's response is that Canada's selection of refugees was elite, choosing only those who were highly educated and who were primarily of Indian descent and had lived in Uganda for long periods of time thus retaining British citizenship. This particular group of Ugandans were given 90 days to leave the country by Ugandan Dictator Idi Amin Dada and Canada responded by quickly accepting 7,000. The arrival of the Ugandan refugees was met with a well-organized reception and subsequent follow-up interviews revealed that 89% were employed and 90% wished to remain in Canada (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000).

In 1970 new guidelines were outlined for the admission of refugees into Canada. These guidelines were presented in the *Immigration Act* and stated that adequate support would have to be provided by public and private sectors, or both acting together (Adelman, 1991). A new amendment no longer limited acceptance to those living outside of their country of origin. This new amendment was important during the Chilean crisis of 1973. The Chilean crisis prompted by the Coup d'état in Chile in 1973, which saw the overthrow of the Socialist-Communist government, resulted in over 7,000 Chilean and other Latin American refugees admitted to Canada. Many Chileans fled the oppressive regime of the new military ruler, General Pinochet. Canada did not open its arms, at least initially, to these refugees as openly as prior waves of refugees had been treated. The reluctance was based on political reasons and Canada not wanting to antagonize Chile's new administration and the United States. Canada had much pressure from church organizations, Amnesty International, The Canadian Labour Congress, The Confederation of National Trade Unions, and others who ultimately met with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Immigration in an attempt to persuade the government to act in this crises in a similar way as demonstrated by responses to the Hungarian, Czechoslovakian, and Ugandan refugee crisis. This plea had no effect. The Canadian government did not want to appear contrary to the United States and was reluctant about admitting Marxist refugees into the country. (Kelley & Trebilcock (2000) cite Dirks' opinion on this matter), "Although 6,990 Chilean refugees were ultimately admitted, Dirks, in his history of Canadian refugee policy, lamented that, 'ideological considerations have replaced racial criteria as a discriminatory factor in determining Canada's refugee admission policy'" (p. 366).

The Indochinese wave of the late 1970s, prompted by the fall of Saigon in 1975, marked the largest refugee intake in Canada's history. In January 1979 the Indochinese designated class of refugee was introduced along with two other classes. The Indochinese class of refugee was the largest in size and prompted the greatest degree of public involvement. Vietnam had been devastated and a steady flow of refugees began leaving the country in 1975, and by 1979 the flow out of Vietnam had become a torrent (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000). Canada's initial response to this crisis accepted very few Indochinese refugees; however, this lack of response prompted much public concern and media criticism. Public concern was on both sides of the situation with some citizens extending goodwill and others voicing concern on the impact of the refugee intake on the existing Canadian population. Nonetheless, this public dialogue and media reporting resulted in increased public support. The Canadian Medical Association urged the government to increase the yearly quota of Indochinese refugees. In June 1979 the quota was raised and Canada accepted 12,000 with 4,000 of those refugees sponsored by private organizations. One month later the quota was raised again to accommodate an intake of 3,000 refugees a month resulting in 50,000 arrivals by the end of 1980 (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000). In part this large refugee intake was based on the government's commitment to accept one refugee for each privately sponsored refugee; however, this commitment was so successful that the government couldn't keep up to this agreement. In 1980 the intake quota was raised essentially enabling Canada to keep its commitment. During the recession of the 1980s this number was reduced. Despite this reduction there was a steady influx of Indochinese refugees as a result of the family reunification agreement between Canada and Vietnam. This Indochinese movement saw a concerted effort by the government to seek private sponsorship to accommodate the volume of refugees. The Conservative government, at the time, initially agreed to match the sponsorship numbers presented by the private sector but subsequently backed out on this agreement. This refugee crisis saw the Canadian government embark on a special task force—the Refugee Task Force—to coordinate the activities overseas and here at home. Prior to this refugee wave of 1978, Canada treated Vietnamese refugees with less urgency and reach. The period 1975-1976 saw an initial response for Canada and a pledge from the Prime Minister at the time Pierre Trudeau to accept 5,000 refugees and is largely believed to be motivated by a sense of obligation to show support to The United States (Adelman, 1991). Adelman suggested that the norms that prompted action in Canada did not necessarily align with

the United States who responded as part of the consequence for their involvement in the war.

The *Immigration Act* of 1976, promulgated in 1978, saw a formal obligation and commitment for Canada to accept refugee claimants (Hawkins, 1988). In addition, Canada now had the discretion to accept refugees based on humanitarian reasons, as opposed to the rather ad hoc approach demonstrated in the past. At this point Canada formalized a 'designated class' as part of the immigration policy (Adelman, 1991). This meant that there were now classes of refugees: Government Assisted Refugees, Privately-Sponsored Refugees, and Refugee Claimants (those seeking a designation hearing). The *Act* established Canada's legal obligation "to uphold its humanitarian tradition with respect to the displaced and the persecuted" (from the *Act*, quoted by Hawkins, 1988, p. 379). The *Act* also intended to set up better procedures for determination of refugees and clearer guidelines for sponsorship that encouraged both the voluntary and the public sectors. This move was particularly helpful in the management of the Indo-Chinese influx (Hawkins, 1988).

Refugee classes or designations remain in place today. For some refugees these designations have a negative impact on their ability to settle in the host country. For refugees who fall under the Refugee Claimant category their life may be placed seemingly on hold. As their status in Canada is undecided, this group of refugees have limited access to services. They must await a hearing to substantiate their claim, which may or may not be accepted. This refugee group is particularly vulnerable as their future is unclear and fear of being deported is ongoing making settlement an elusive concept. The refugee population may be more widespread than statistics indicate. Refugees, once settled, may sponsor members of their family to Canada. These newcomers would be applying for immigration under the Family Reunification program and may not be categorized as refugees. Although they are not classified as refugees, their past experience is that of a refugee, therefore they may be arriving in Canada equally as vulnerable as a defined refugee and likely have experienced trauma that has manifested in health issues, yet they are not categorized as refugees. The data on this potential population is not reflected in census or other demographic information. This is an important consideration as there may be a larger population of refugees than indicated and therefore a gap in services may exist.

The above cases have been presented to demonstrate Canada's changing impetus for acceptance, changes in policy, and to highlight some of the most notable waves of refugees into Canada. This is not an inclusive list, nor an examination of the full range of refugee intake in Canada; there certainly have been other waves of refugees from various countries. The refugee experience in many ways expresses the extreme challenges facing immigrants. The very definition of refugee emphasizes the fear that precipitates their movement. Feelings of trauma, loss, and confusion accompany this group, in addition to the poverty that they are likely to encounter in their host country. There are multi-barriers and complexities facing refugees that I feel warrant a close look at as a very vulnerable population to see what challenges and successes can assist in a better understanding of how we settle and integrate all immigrants. Thus, SWIS workers who work with refugee families, I believe, have stories to share that will perhaps inform the SWIS program and will likely, by extension, be applicable to all immigrant groups. Hearing these stories through the perspective of SWIS workers provided an opportunity for an authentic account of the refugee experience as SWIS workers articulated. The success of this program with this particular group will be an indicator of the success with other groups. The unique needs of refugees challenge a program geared at settlement; therefore, lessons learned, I believe, in dealing with this distinct group will extrapolate to assist in meeting the needs of all newcomers accessing the program

2.4. Current Immigration Issues and Solutions

The recent decades of immigration, post 1990, have prompted much debate around what drives and facilitates the purpose of immigration. Several considerations are typically highlighted in this debate. Often noted are concerns around labour needs, political impetus, family reunification, and humanitarian purposes as is the case with refugee intake. Despite the discussion around what drives immigration, the fact remains that Canada, in recent years, has received on average, 250,000 immigrants per year of which 28,000 were refugees in 2011. This large volume of immigration rivals that of the earlier waves in the early 1900s. What has shifted in the current immigration landscape is that newcomers are not provided the option to settle in rural areas, as was the case with early immigrant homesteads. This has placed a tremendous stress on urban areas,

where immigrants typically settle, and thus placed many demands on the settlement and integration of newcomers into the host society. The first few years of immigration are challenging as newcomers attempt to settle into their community by finding employment and settling their children in schools. Immigration is an increased focus of the government as demonstrated by recent attention on provincial immigration needs, “Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney is crossing the country to promote his reforms to the system, trying to make it more responsive to the needs of employers and the economy” (Friesen, 2012b, “Ottawa’s plan falls short,” para. 2). The current Conservative government reform plans include:

- Require higher levels of English or French fluency
- More points to you younger applicants
- A new stream for trades people
- A new start-up visa designed to attract entrepreneurs
- More selection power to employers
- Eliminating the application backlog
- Assessing professionals’ credentials before they immigrate
- Temporary foreign workers can be paid 15 per cent less than Canadians, but more can become citizens
- Removing control of settlement funding from Manitoba and B.C.
- Conditional permanent residency for spouses to deter marriage fraud
(Friesen, 2012a, “The Harper government’s proposed reforms,” F1)

These reforms have been met with opposition; however, on the surface they appear to be aimed at easing the settlement and integration process for immigrants by soliciting that immigrants are better prepared, so to speak, prior to coming to Canada. This is perhaps indicative of a direct effort to address the settlement and long-term integration of newcomers to Canada. Immigration is a serious matter, and, as Ghosh and Abdi (2004) state:

This is partially triggered by the knowledge that continually falling birth rates are not likely to increase in the foreseeable future, and the only way to deal with the situation is to increase the number of immigrants that are allowed to come to Canada every year to over 300,000. Issues of population growth and decline in this regard are more than just a desire for a given level of population. (p. 146)

With immigration being such a key component of Canadian population programs such as SWIS are well positioned within this context.

Not only has immigration policy shifted over the years, the long-term outcomes for the immigrant population has also changed. Earlier waves of immigration were often settled in rural areas. The notion of homesteading was a common way to populate rural areas and stimulate agricultural economies. Currently this concept is no longer an option. There is a current mandate of welcoming skilled immigrants based on economic needs. Canada has recently initiated a Federal Skilled Trades Program which supports the Economic Action Plan 2013 aimed at building a fast and flexible immigration process focused on Canada's economic and labour needs. Additional programs such as the Provincial Nominee Program focus on the skills, education, and work experience demonstrated by to make an immediate economic impact (WelcomeBC, n.d.b). Programs such as these indicate a direct mandate to recruit skilled immigrants to contribute to the economy. For many of these immigrants large urban centres will be their destination placing strain on both the immigrant and the host community. For refugees, who also may arrive in large urban centres, the process of settlement is particularly problematic. Many refugees are arriving to this competitive environment with severe limitations enabling them to engage in the settlement process. Some supports are currently in place to assist refugees as they begin the settlement process such as: The Interim Federal Health Program and the Resettlement Assistance Program. Programs such as these indicate a need for specialized services to assist with refugee settlement.

2.5. Creating a Need for Settlement Workers in Schools

From the 1990s to the current outlook on immigration there has been a realization that Canada may not be fully benefitting economically from immigration. Thus, there is a direction in immigration that is currently analyzing and considering how Canada acclimatizes or integrates immigrants into its society more quickly and in more effective ways. There is a current need for government policy to address this and the conceptualization and implementation of a program such as SWIS clearly attests to this trend. Waves of immigration during the recent century and the diversity of ethnic groups have led to a new look for the Canadian population. Asian countries are now the

primary source of immigration (Statistics Canada, 2006). Coinciding with this change in immigrant ethnicity and demographics there has been an evolving move by both the federal and provincial governments to develop and implement policies that promote and foster better settlement and integration practices for newcomers and their families.

British Columbia has experienced significant growth through immigration and is now home to 13% of Canada's population and is home to 16% of Canada's newcomer population. The size and demographic profile of British Columbia has changed significantly over the past 20 years. According to a recent report from Statistics Canada, British Columbia's population rose by 32% to just over 4,494,200 boasting the fastest population growth among other Canadian provinces and also the largest inflow from interprovincial migration (Statistics Canada, 2006). Predictions are that by 2030 at least one in four Canadians will be foreign born, and in British Columbia's Lower Mainland the suggested number may exceed that (Statistics Canada, 2006). Traditionally immigrants settle in larger urban centres. Metro Vancouver is currently the second largest host area—second only to Toronto and its surrounding area. The urban area highlighted in this study is currently one of the fastest-growing populations primarily due to the influx of newcomers. Currently the metro area in this study is home to a significant population of newcomers with all predictions suggesting no indication of that number decreasing. In fact, recent reports place this metro area as the fastest growing community based on immigration (Statistics Canada, 2009). Recent Census information states that in 2008 immigration continued to climb in the Lower Mainland seeing a number second only to the 2005 immigration pattern. British Columbia received the third highest population of immigrants with the Lower Mainland receiving the bulk of those immigrants new to the province.

2.6. History of Settlement Workers in Schools Program (SWIS)

The SWIS program began in 2003 in Ontario and soon after expanded to include other provinces including British Columbia. The SWIS program in Ontario evolved out of a coming together of CIC, Settlement Agencies and School Boards to help newcomer students and their families settle in schools and communities (FERENCE Weicker & Company, 2007). Ontario has taken the lead in the development of this program and

has been successful in operating SWIS programs in 11 regions. According to SWIS, Ontario, Canada, “As of April, 2010, there are SWIS programs active in eleven Ontario regions. In total, approximately 250 settlement workers from 22 settlement agencies are based in 22 school boards” (Thames Valley District School Board, n.d., para. 1). One notable difference between Ontario and British Columbia’s model is the use of external settlement agencies versus public school districts for the delivery of SWIS programs. The Ontario SWIS program places settlement workers from community agencies in elementary and secondary schools. Ontario has a long history of settlement services and a current multitude of services available to newcomers in the province. As such, Ontario has framed its SWIS in the settlement agency services. Under this model the agencies are external to school districts, yet they have the same mandate of connecting families to resources that will have a positive impact on student and family involvement in the schools and the community at large. The British Columbian model, in all but one school district, demonstrates a model whereby the initial contact for students and families is the school district and SWIS services are provided within the school district where SWIS workers are employed by school districts not external agencies. This delivery model supports the concept that schools are often the first point of contact for newcomers providing an opportunity for immediate assistance. This is particularly important for the hard-to-reach or multi-barriered immigrants who are, for the most part, refugees. This school-based approach assists in ensuring all newcomers receive access to the SWIS program. As clearly stated in a process evaluation of the BC SWIS reporters Ference Weicker & Company (2008) posit, “Schools are one of the first services with which new immigrants to BC connect in the community” (p. ii). Fix, Zimmerman, and Passel (2001) outline reasons why a school district could expand its mandate to provide such services:

From an *institutional* perspective, mainstream institutions (e.g., public schools, welfare offices, job training centers) offer advantages: They (1) typically have comparatively deep institutional capacity; (2) have developed bureaucratic structures (accounting, personnel offices, and the like); (3) are often bound by established due process norms and procedures that can limit arbitrariness; and (4) frequently have developed political constituencies. (p. 17)

Schools today, therefore, are subject to considerable pressures to deliver core government policies in relation to standards whilst also responding to initiatives to

reduce truancy and exclusions. The school agenda is already a very crowded one with tensions such as those between raising standards and tackling social exclusion (Featherstone & Manby, 2006). Schools are often considered places of settlement, safety and security despite the fact that they are often set in racially saturated and unsettling times. Recognizing this, in the spring of 2007, the Settlement and Multicultural Division of the Ministry of Attorney General and the Ministry of Education undertook a review of options to enhance the role of school districts in the settlement of school-age immigrants and their families (FERENCE Weicker & Company, 2008, p. i). In addition to this immediacy, it is believed that schools have an infrastructure that will support and welcome the role of SWIS workers as employees within the same organization as opposed to “outside” agencies trying to connect when they are not part of the same system (personal communication with Ministry Program Coordinator, November, 2009).

In British Columbia the need to develop specialized programs for school-aged immigrants and their families stemmed from consultative meetings between CIC, Ministry of Education staff, and school district representatives between 2007 and 2008. Based on an extensive needs assessment and evaluation and input from program stakeholders the direction of the SWIS program was formalised. School districts had the ability to work in concert with the Ministry to provide SWIS services. Programs were initially offered to school districts according to the number of English Language Learner (ELL) students. As noted above, school districts were offered the option of contracting out the service or providing an internal model; most districts chose to offer an internal structure. In 2007-2008 the BC SWIS program was launched in 10 districts with the highest concentration of ELL students. The following year 2008-2009 the program expanded to include 10 more school districts in British Columbia (FERENCE Weiker & Company, 2008).

2.7. SWIS Program Mandate

Given the current demographic of the school district studied and the intended outcomes of both the provincial and federal government to aid in the integration process of immigrant students and their families the role of SWIS workers is timely and relevant. The SWIS program goals and intended outcomes attest to the importance the Ministry

has placed on improving the settlement and integration process for newcomers long term, it is intended that the program will lead to:

Better and faster integration of immigrant families in Canadian society

Helping students to focus on education and academic issues

Creating a school culture that is more inclusive of newcomer families and their cultures and beliefs

Better integration of services for newcomer families

(FERENCE WEICKER AND COMPANY, 2008, p. 9)

The SWIS program has evolved, in part, from an agreement between both the federal and provincial (BC) Ministry, which saw the province of BC receive federal funding under the *Agreement for Canada–British Columbia Co-operation on Immigration* (CIC, 2004). Following this announcement of federal funding in November 2006 the Ministry of Attorney General and the Ministry of Education initiated a plan for a school-based approach to delivery of settlement services. The Ministry of Attorney General (2006) recognized the important role schools play as the first point of entrance for most newcomers and their families, and the need to assist immigrant families in their first year of settlement. Although directed as a first-year service there is an understanding that first year is not easily defined as such as many newcomers, in particular refugees, may require extended time to receive services and orientation to enable them to function reasonably independently in Canada. Additionally there may be gaps in the service whereby refugee clients lose touch with the program and re-engage at a later date. Thus SWIS workers will work toward the following key program objectives:

Table 2.2. Ministry-intended Outcomes for Settlement Workers in Schools

To help children adjust to school culture and focus on learning while providing their parents information and resources on settlement and immigration issues

To increase parents' understanding of Canadian culture and school systems

To increase parent involvement in the school and community

To assess needs of immigrant families and the barriers to successful integration

To increase access to programs and services and work to improve the effectiveness of those programs.

Note. Data adapted from Ministry of Attorney General, Settlement and Multiculturalism Division, September 20, 2007)

Along with these stated objectives in Table 2.3 are reported immediate, intermediate, and final outcomes noted below:

Table 2.3. Ministry Immediate, Intermediate, and Final Outcomes

Immediate/Intermediate Outcomes
Students
Newcomer students are more engaged in the school system
Newcomer students receive valuable information about school programs, after-school activities, future education, summer employment, and other community resources
Newcomer students are accessing school and after-school activities
Newcomer Students are supported in conflict resolution
Parents
Newcomer parents are more familiar with Canadian culture and school system
Newcomer parents are more involved in school activities and their children's education
Newcomer parents are supported in conflict resolution
Newcomer parents are more aware of community and government resources
Newcomer parents are accessing services/ programs/networks within school and community
Schools
Increased cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity of teachers and school staff
Increased knowledge about community resources and needs of newcomers
Settlement Agencies and other Partner Agencies
Improved outreach and access to newcomer families
Strengthened relationship with school and other partners
Increased referrals between school and community agencies

Final Outcomes
Better and faster integration of immigrant families into Canadian Society
Students are more focused on education and academic issues
School culture is more inclusive of newcomer families and their cultures and beliefs
Better integration of services for newcomer families

Note. Data adapted from Ministry of Attorney General, Settlement and Multiculturalism Division, September 20, 2007)

It is important to view the full range of Ministry outcomes and objectives to appreciate the direction the Ministry has crafted for the program outcomes to ultimately impact the program final outcomes. As indicated in Table 2.3, there are three main areas to assess the program—through the experience of students, parents, and schools. This research was concerned with the first five outcomes stated by the Ministry (Table 2.2), but it is crucial to frame these outcomes in the context of the more robust Ministry mandate as expressed through all the program outcomes and objectives.

2.8. SWIS Program Reported Success by Ministry

To date the SWIS program has been, by and large, evaluated by quantitative data. The Ministry commissioned an evaluation of the BC SWIS program in 2008 with the following key areas under review: program design and delivery; program need and relevance; and impacts and effects (FERENCE & WEICKER & COMPANY, 2008). The following table summarizes the major findings and recommendations resulting from this evaluation (Table 2.4)

Table 2.4. Summary of Findings and Recommendations of BC SWIS

Major Findings and Conclusions

1. The Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Education and the school districts have been very successful in launching the new program as planned.
2. The BC SWIS Initiative has made significant progress in establishing linkages with other resources in schools, with community and government programs, and with other settlement programs and resources in the community.
3. As of March 2008, only a small percentage of the 10% Partnership Fund had been spent by the school districts to purchase services from settlement agencies.
4. The Initiative is broadly viewed as being successful to date in achieving its objectives.
5. It is too early to draw conclusions regarding the relative cost-effectiveness of the program across the school districts and the models used.

Recommendations

- School districts must continue to work to increase awareness of the program amongst the key target groups.
- High priority should be placed on further strengthening coordination, interaction and information sharing with other service providers in the settlement sector, schools, and communities.
- Responsibility for further training and professional development opportunities should be shared between the Settlement and Multiculturalism (SaM) Division of Ministry of Attorney General and participating school districts.
- The Partnership Fund should be closely monitored by the Ministry to ensure all the necessary steps are taken to increase utilization of the funding.
- Work should continue on development of a standardized database that can be used across school districts.
- The definition of “first year settlement needs” has caused some confusion among settlement workers and should be reviewed and clarified if necessary.
- Key issues raised in the process evaluation should be followed up on as part of the summative evaluation.

Note. Adapted from FERENCE WEICKER & COMPANY, 2008.

Data from this report was collected by way of surveys and interviews with 55 settlement workers, 17 school representatives, and 16 other stakeholders were interviewed. The questions posed resulted in data of a quantitative nature. For example the questions prompted yes/no answers or rankings using a Likert scale. This resulted in data largely represented by percentages representing responses from the three groups. Results

were then analyzed and conclusions were developed based on these results in a final report, "Process Evaluation of the British Columbia Settlement Workers in Schools Initiative" (FERENCE Weicker & Company, 2008). Participating school districts in the BC SWIS program report to the Ministry in a largely quantitative manner. The Ministry seeks information regarding how many families have been served and how many community services have been accessed. As part of the process evaluation, FERENCE Weicker & Company (2008) indicated that, "in conducting the process evaluation, we undertook a detailed review of program reports, tabulated and assessed the statistical reports prepared by each school district" (p. iii) To date, it appears that limited to no qualitative data has been collected, analyzed, and reported.

2.9. Background and Context of School District Studied

This particular school district SWIS program began in early 2008 providing a unique 'grass-roots' research opportunity. The program has grown to include the opening of a Welcome Centre, hiring of 25 SWIS workers, implementation of centralized assessment practices, data collection of immigrant demographics, as well as full implementation and supervision of SWIS workers in their intended role. To understand the goals of this SWIS program a starting point is to outline the expectations of this position in this school district. This position is a clearly defined position within a school district in that there is a stated job description and parameters, a caseload, and a defined work schedule. The primary focus of settlement workers in this school district is to: facilitate integration and settlement of newcomer families through systematic outreach to newly-arrived families; to provide them with the information about available services; needs assessment; cross-cultural education; and referral (school district).

The job responsibilities outlined in the job specifications as posted by this school district include: assessment of settlement needs and consultation, referrals, interpretation/translation, support between home/school, organizing workshops and conducting outreach activities, assisting with employment needs, facilitating parental school involvement, and general advocacy for clients.⁴ The role of the SWIS workers is

⁴ From job specifications (school district studied).

in addition to this school district’s current support staff role of multicultural workers. The primary difference between the roles of the two is the exclusive “settlement” role of the SWIS workers, who will work only with newly-arrived Canadians (less than one year, or those who are beyond one year but require further support). The following Table 2.5 summarizes the roles of both the Multicultural and Settlement workers in this school district.

Table 2.5. Multicultural and Settlement Workers in Schools: Overview or Roles

Multicultural Workers	Settlement Workers in Schools
Facilitating communication between home and through supporting school staff, including arranging meetings and interpreting in academic contexts such a parent-teacher meetings, IEP meetings, etc.	Outreach services to all ELL families new to the District and community.
Enhancing cross-cultural understanding by providing information to schools about family/cultural background to facilitate appropriate educational support for the student.	Settlement counseling for students, parents, or families through information and orientation sessions.
Facilitating cross-cultural understanding by providing information in the first language to the student and his/her family about Canadian culture.	Organizing and conducting workshop and group activities
Assisting school staff with conducting multicultural education activities	Translation and interpretation in settlement contexts
	Referral and service linking to appropriate school/community programs, workshops, or support groups relating to settlement within the community which may include: Canadian Parenting, Employment search, Library resources, Subsidized housing, Counseling, Immigrations, Medical/Dental, Transportation, ELL classes, Legal issues, Social assistance, and volunteering

Note. Adapted with permission from in-house School District No. 38 documents.

This particular SWIS program has grown to now include 25 SWIS workers representing 29 languages and cultures. It currently services approximately 11,000 families and in the past four years it has serviced just under 25,000 families, including providing English assessments on over 7,900 students and connecting families to 563,368 services related to settlement.⁵ All intake assessments continue to be performed at a central location providing a consistent and immediate assessment of language needs for each

⁵ Statistics provided by school district staff via email July 5, 2012.

student. At the initial assessment stage families are connected to SWIS workers who begin immediately working with families. The central location offers programs for parents to improve their English skills as well as access programs that assist in bridging some of the late-arriving immigrant youth into high school completion and/or employment while also developing their language skills. These are complementary programs that help to provide a more holistic approach to settlement. SWIS workers connect with outside agencies that provide services to help meet the needs of newcomer families. As our communities grapple with the steady influx of newcomers and their families, issues such as settlement and integration become of paramount importance. The SWIS program is a pro-active approach that recognizes the need for schools and communities to work together to ensure a better transition into the host community.

2.10. Conclusion

It was important in this section to provide a brief overview of the history of both mainstream and refugee immigration. This process demonstrates the ongoing need for immigration and how Canada has responded historically to this need. Canada has shifted its mandate of immigration over the years and continues to emphasize changes in policies and procedures to ensure better services are offered to newcomers and that the immigrant experience leads to a fully-integrated society whereby all members have opportunities to live a quality life in Canada. As Canada has evolved to a country where immigration is fully understood as a 2-way process, it is not surprising that a program such as SWIS has been implemented. Canadians value the role that immigrants play in their communities and certainly continue to focus on better ways to transition newcomers into Canadian communities. This has never been an easy process, and, to date, settlement and integration continue to be complex processes. As well, large numbers of immigrants now settle in large Canadian urban centres—a shift from earlier immigrants settling Canada's vast hinterland. This new reality has indeed prompted a need for immigrants to adjust to a post-industrial urban society where language and education is key for successful integration. For the refugee population this process is exacerbated by trauma, fear, and loss. This is a vulnerable population that greatly benefits from the work that SWIS workers perform.

Chapter 3.

Literature Review

3.1. Introduction

The literature review seeks to elucidate integral concepts and key themes that situate the research findings in theoretical frameworks that are critical to fully understanding the complexity of settlement and integration and the important role SWIS workers play in facilitating this. To begin with, this portion of the literature review will position the SWIS program in the larger theoretical underpinnings of the work SWIS workers provide including: settlement, integration, cultural mediator, cultural insider, which are crucial areas for the researcher to demonstrate a solid understanding as a foundation to the entire research project. Without the theoretical understanding it is difficult to fully appreciate the magnitude of the SWIS workers' role. As part of this exploration the concept of continuum will demonstrate how settlement and integration flow. In a report, "Best Settlement Practices: Settlement Services for Refugees and Immigrants in Canada" (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998), the authors draw heavily on a contextual framework that places settlement and integration on two different points of a continuum with settlement viewed as the very beginning stage of adjusting to a different culture. The term settlement will be looked at in two different ways in the literature review beginning with what we know now about settlement in general, and then it will be discussed further by discussing how settlement is different for refugees and what challenges and barriers refugees face in the settlement process. Once these theoretical underpinnings (settlement, integration) have been fully explored this chapter will move on to review the literature on refugee settlement including refugee health and cultural adjustment in particular followed by discussion on cultural mediation and the insider perspective.

The SWIS program demonstrates a new direction and continued commitment to the concepts briefly outlined above. Canada, and British Columbia in particular, offers a rich backdrop for this program. As both Canada and British Columbia have long discussed the value of immigrant populations it would seem a natural extension to look at better ways to facilitate the process. Initial settlement is defined in part by basic needs: shelter, clothing, health, education, employment, etc. and, as illustrated in this section, early settlement is part of the process along the continuum to integration. Settlement and integration are individual responses to the immigration process based on each immigrant's unique experience; whereas, multiculturalism is a final outcome for all and is a national construct that is in some ways a defining quality and inherent understanding of Canadian society. Each of these play a role in the newcomer experience and are important guiding constructs when considering how Canada receives and welcomes its newcomer population. To fully appreciate the current climate of Canadian culture it is necessary to first ensure that there is an understanding as why the continuum from settlement to multiculturalism is important and what it means in Canada. As a global model for multiculturalism (Day, 2002; Ghosh & Abdh, 2004; Kymlicka 1998, 2009; Reitz, 2002) Canada did not get here without much debate and concern with issues of settlement, integration and how they inform our definition of multiculturalism. Although these concepts—settlement, integration—are inherently interwoven each will be examined separately with a concluding section that merges this ideology into a cohesive backdrop for this study. This serves as an appropriate starting point in the literature review.

3.2. Settlement

Settlement programs exist to facilitate the successful settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees into the social, economic, cultural, and political life in Canada. It is one of Canada's settlement service sector's guiding principles that all immigrants and refugees have access to varying levels of settlement services. In a recent announcement, October 6th is now acknowledged as a day of recognition for newcomers to the province of British Columbia (Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, 2010). This day is now observed in British Columbia to honour the contributions of our newcomer population to the province indicating as Wong,

a Canadian immigration researcher, noted, “Settlement services are instrumental in helping immigrants succeed in the Canadian economy and integrate into their communities” (as cited in Ministry of Advance Education, 2010). Settlement programs are typically viewed as a shared responsibility between government, both federal and local, and community-based settlement services, yet ultimately it is the entire community that is home to the newcomer and must ultimately serve as the host for recipients and manage the day-to-day issues that may emerge as newcomers adapt to their new community. The SWIS program responds to this ideal.

In a working/discussion document developed by a partnership between Centro Organizzativo Scuole Tecniche Italiane (COSTI), a well-established 1952 organization devoted to providing services to new Canadians and their families, and the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation through the Newcomer Settlement Program, a definition of settlement suggests a process that includes:

- Adjustment: acclimatizing and getting used to the new culture, language, people and environment.
- Adaptation: learning and managing the situation without a great deal of formal assistance.
- Integration: actively participating, getting involved and contributing as citizens (in the broader definition as opposed to the legal definition) of the new country. (Metropolis, n.d., “Defining immigrant settlement,” para. 1)

This definition moves from initial acclimatization to active participation in the host country. The authors clearly indicate that stages of a continuum from settlement to integration are not easily defined by bureaucratic processes or specific timeframes, but realistically the stages are overlapping, and as stated by the authors:

In reality they are interconnected and overlapping processes that start when a newcomer arrives in Canada and which continue in one form or another until he or she dies. We are not just asking someone to integrate into a static culture, but to become part of the transformation of that culture. (SettlementAtWork.org, 2000, p. 13)

An important distinction between integration and settlement is simply defined based on long-term versus short-term needs and the focus on the adjustment and adaptation stages at the initial stage of settlement. Settlement is concerned with what may also be referred as acclimatization and initial adaptation—a stage where newcomers’ needs are

basic: housing, language skill development, employment, orientation, financial stability, and health. On the other end integration is the longer-term process whereby newcomers become full and equal participants in the host society. In order for newcomers to reach the stage of integration certain settlement issues must be dealt with first. This stage is the starting point for this vulnerable group of refugees and is very low whereby basic concepts are not in place to assist in a seamless transition to the basic needs of settlement.

In a paper, *Best Settlement Practices: Settlement Services for Refugees and Immigrants in Canada* published by the Canadian Council for Refugees (1998), the authors view settlement as a process leading to integration. In their view, “no brief summary can do justice to a subject so complex” (“Settlement and integration,” para. 1). In fact, they cite the different terms used to articulate the (re)settlement process: resettlement, settlement, adaptation, adjustment, and integration. They view this process as a continuum as represented in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. The Settlement/Integration Continuum

Resettlement/settlement



Note. Adapted from Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998 (“Settlement and integration,” Chart 1).

In this instance, and for the purpose of this continuum, the authors suggest that:

settlement generally refers to acclimatization and the early stages of adaptation, when newcomers make the basic adjustments to life in a new country, including finding somewhere to live, beginning to learn the local language, getting a job, and learning to find their way around an unfamiliar society. *Integration* is the longer-term process through which newcomers become full and equal participants in all the various dimensions of society. (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998, “Settlement and integration,” para. 3).

The report continues to indicate that settlement and integration are multi-dimensional concepts. They articulate four main spheres that newcomers must

attend to and illustrate how success is measured in each of these spheres or dimensions (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Possible Indicators of Settlement and Integration

Dimension	Short-term (Settlement)	Longer term (integration)
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Entering job market ▪ Financial independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Career advancement ▪ Income parity ▪ Entry into field of prior employment
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Established social network ▪ Diversity within social network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accessing institutions ▪ Engaging in efforts to change institutions
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adaptation of various aspects of lifestyle (e.g., diet, family relationships) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaging in efforts to redefine cultural identity ▪ Adapting or reassessing values
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizenship ▪ Voting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participation in political parties ▪ Participation in socio-political movements

Note. Adapted from Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998.

Currently, settlement is a major policy issue in Canada (Wong & Poisson, 2008). This sentiment is in response to concerns around long-term economic stability of immigrants and may be driven in part by a growing frustration experienced by newcomers with their inability to utilize their skills, education, and potential in Canada. This occurs in both the public and private areas of their life. Adding to the frustration of newcomers is a growing frustration with the outreach service providers who are often overwhelmed with the barriers they face (Wong & Poisson, 2008). Immigrant families have strengths that can erode over time. For many they arrive in good health, with intact families, strong work ethic, and high aspirations for the future of their families, but over time these strengths can be undermined by difficulties around settlement and integration. For example, immigrants may have been led to believe that their skills and education would enable them to gain meaningful employment; however, that is not always the case and families may be facing hardship as opposed to improving the quality of life.

As noted by Korac (2003), the very term “settlement” has complex implications in this instance for refugees:

Even the terms used to describe this process—absorb, assimilate, incorporate or integrate refugees—suggest the complexity, ambiguity and contention surrounding the issue. (p. 52)

Part of the settlement period is an initial culture shock. The many changes facing newcomers are significant. They will experience physical changes—new housing, difference in population density, and changes between rural and urban lifestyles—to name a few. In addition to physical changes there may be physiological changes as a result of nutritional changes or exposure to new diseases (Berry, 1990). Further, significant changes in the political culture of the new country may prove to be shocking and in direct contrast to religious and political views of the country of origin. Economic changes may present a drastic change resulting in a loss of autonomy and independence. And, certainly, overall changes in all aspects of the new culture: language, food, social expectations, educational differences, and many other day-to-day differences experienced will impact the process. The settlement phase is particularly important and potentially an intervention point for successful integration. Unfortunately, Canada has not always been as effective as possible in this regard (Berry, 1990). According to Berry, “many settlement programs have not taken advantage of mental health professionals, have not learned from previous refugee waves, and have not been formally evaluated” (p. 100). He further cites occasions where families have been dispersed and attests that some settlement policies have been “downright wrong”, noting cases where sponsors have sought cheap labour or converts. Despite these reported weaknesses in the settlement process, Berry does note that most refugees do settle without serious problems particularly when language training, monetary support, and cultural orientation are provided. He further highlights the importance of this stage as a time to identify those at risk and continue to provide and expand upon the initial supports.

Defining and providing settlement is not always straightforward or clearly mandated. In a chapter devoted to the coordination of settlement services, Barbara Burnaby (1991) outlines the tensions that exist between centrally-focused organizations (the federal government for example) and locally-focused organizations (school districts, etc.). She draws a comparison to how environmentalism is treated and understood in Canada versus that of the settlement industry. She claims that as a whole, Canadians in general, as well as politicians and organizations, are better educated and unified in their concern for environmental issues, and she stresses that the settlement sector is not at this same point of understanding. Settlement is still, in her view, at the “sub-political” level; whereas, environmentalism has moved to a more cohesively organized arena.

The point Burnaby intends to raise is that environmentalism is a pervasive concern in Canada; whereas, settlement is not generally viewed in such a large context and thought about by as many Canadians. This tension manifests in a lack of understanding of key issues surrounding settlement and a certain ineffectiveness of delivery models. She quotes Donald Schon as claiming that:

The opportunity for learning is primarily in discovering systems at the periphery, not in the nexus of official policies at the center....The centre's role is to detect significant shifts at the periphery, to pay explicit attention to the emergence of ideas in good currency, and to derive themes of policy by induction (Schon, 1971, pp. 177-78). (as cited in Burnaby, 1991, p. 368)

This induction method of policy in the area of settlement is not, in Berry (1990) and Schon's (as cited in Burnaby, 1991) opinion, enacted in Canada. Burnaby attests to the lack of progression in terms of settlement, and indeed multiculturalism as a whole, as government-imposed policies without input from service providers and a general lack of dissemination of information to potentially powerful stakeholders, and furthermore to immigrants themselves (Burnaby, 1991). She suggests that issues around settlement of immigrants are urgent and that in order to move to a level that mirrors current national understanding of environmentalism there needs to be:

- a. better advocacy on the part of immigrant groups and service providers;
- b. governments need to provide better education to Canadians regarding the social and economic role of immigration in Canada;
- c. and cooperation rather than competition needs to occur between central and local stakeholders

(Burnaby, 1991)

Recognition of the immediate need to settle families (housing/employment) was viewed as urgent and of primary concern. However, it was noted that:

When families join the immigrant breadwinners, however, the need to supply schooling for the children becomes a central issue for the newcomers and for this host country. At this point, education often turns into the key issue of integration. (Pitkänen, Kalekin-Fishman, & Verma, 2002, p. 9)

Thus, the authors conclude:

What are schools supposed to do? Both the permanent immigrants' children and for the children of those who remain in the host country only for a period, educational policies are a crucial tool for achieving integration. (p. 180)

Refugee settlement and integration literature unanimously highlight the many challenges facing refugees as they attempt to settle and integrate into their host culture. The complexities are astounding, thus Rutter and Jones (1998) pose the question:

So who are these children and what are their circumstances? How can teachers understand a pupil in their class if they are unaware that the young person has come to this country alone and is being looked after by a 19-year old brother? Or that she is the only survivor of a massacre by rebel forces? Or that she thinks her parents must have wanted to get rid of her? Or that she spent nine months in prison after being a child soldier or politically active? Or that she does not want to move from a children's home to foster caregivers? (p. 49)

These are profound questions raised by Rutter and Jones. The childhood trauma experienced by some refugee children is horrific. Imagine the difficulties in front of these children as they attempt to navigate from a place of insecurity, trauma, and extreme stress to the mainstream population of a school. For teachers, these students present a level of complexity in the classroom that adds to the day-to-day challenges they face. Transitioning from the troubled and complicated backgrounds of refugees to successful integration into a host culture requires tremendous support.

Settlement is the beginning stage of integration into a society. Canada has a long history of settlement services as previously discussed. Settlement is a complex phenomenon as outlined in this section. For the refugee population the barriers can be immense and difficult to overcome. The fact that many of this vulnerable group are functioning at the very preliminary stage of settlement upon arrival makes settlement that much more complicated. The very notion of settlement assumes that immigrants are prepared to take care of their own basic needs once they find the resources. This assumption does not align with the background experiences of many refugees, who for the first time will be faced with many unfamiliar tasks, expectations, and concepts. Indeed, settlement for refugees is different and will be highlighted in greater detail in a subsequent section of this literature review.

3.3. Integration

Settlement and integration may be considered as part of the same continuum, but there is no clear direction or flow pattern whereby newcomers may move forward in this process in some areas and not at all in other areas and at times reverting to an earlier stage. In this research settlement and integration are viewed as two different processes, yet the lines are not defined as though one is now settled and ready to move toward integration; indeed it is not that straightforward. However, distinctions are made that settlement is the beginning process and is concerned with the immediate; whereas, integration is a long-term goal and is achieved based on successful settlement. Often noted is that true integration is demonstrated by full immersion in the new country—in participation in politics, community activism, memberships, exercising voting rights, and inter-racial partnerships and marriages. It has been noted that the decision to adopt a new citizenship, in this case Canadian, attests to a true commitment to country and willingness to fully integrate (Kymlicka, 2009). In Canada nothing extra is gained, per se, by taking this oath as permanent residents and government-assisted refugees, as non-citizens, have access to all resources available to Canadian citizens. The defining difference as a Canadian citizen is the right to vote. Exercising the right to vote demonstrates an interest and willingness to fully participate in and consider important fundamental beliefs and a commitment to core values as demonstrated by supporting a chosen political party.

Successful integration is part of this continuum and is aided by successful settlement. True integration for refugees arriving as adults with great needs and limited skills challenges the integration process. Some of the research participants commented that the settlement process occurs over the course of many, many years. Integration may not be attainable for all newcomers; however, over time subsequent generations will be able to obtain this. Settlement may be a satisfactory outcome and carry a strong semblance of success. For example, a refugee starting from the extreme point of the continuum, who eventually has an independent lifestyle, although not fully integrated, is indeed a success considering the starting point. Thus, integration may not be the end goal for all newcomers nor should it be an expectation from the host society, but rather an understanding and recognition of how far one has moved on the continuum, which, of

course, depends on the individual starting point; thus the continuum serves as a useful reference and reminder.

The ultimate outcome of the integration process is to determine how immigrants make meaning and eventually settle in to a place somewhere between one or more cultural contexts. This process is exceedingly complex, layered, and varied. Settlement and integration of immigrant students is an intricate phenomenon. As Robinson (1998) points out integration is a vague and chaotic term. The term integration does not, on its own, provide a clear descriptor of the process. Researchers in the field define integration differently and those that design and implement policies around settlement and integration approach settlement in different ways (Korac, 2003). Although integration may be a 'vague' and 'chaotic' term, for this study I will steer away from terms such as assimilation and acculturation (except to cite research that incorporates these terms) as, for me, there are connotations of forfeiting one's first culture for the host culture within these terms, thus I prefer to use integration to express the blending of cultures. The process of integration is complicated but the term itself suggests an intermixing rather than an overriding between cultures. Culture affects the way an individual perceives the world, both on a macro and micro-level (Gunderson, 2007). The reality of integration is that it is a complex synthesis of culture as noted by Gunderson:

Students do not simply adopt or adapt a new culture or become bicultural; rather, they acquire and reject some features of the new culture, retain and reject some features of their first culture, and adapt some features of first culture to second culture, and become socialized into a system that is uniquely individual, imbued with first-and-second-cultural features that are often predictable. (p. 52)

Further, the Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR)—an organization in which networks of foundations work toward assisting immigrants and refugees—utilizes the term “integration” and not “assimilation” to emphasize respect for and incorporation of differences and the need for mutual adaptation. Integration also reflects an appreciation of diversity instead of the homogeneity that “assimilation” has come to connote. In addition, the literal meaning of integration—combining and coordinating separate elements—seems a more appropriate way of expressing Canadian views and values toward immigration. The metaphor of mosaic comes to mind, which suggests pieces of culture together as a whole as opposed to the melting-

pot metaphor which suggests a unified outcome. With an official *Multicultural Act* and continued efforts to achieve better immigration practices and policies integration undoubtedly it is an important Canadian concern.

Integration requires the process of navigating and re-inventing a new sense of self. This transpires through social contexts and relationships. Integration requires a blending of cultural behaviours, whereas, acculturation and assimilation both imply an abandoning of one's first culture in favour of the dominant culture. Abdi and Ghosh (2004) maintain that acculturation and assimilation lead to levels of stress caused by anxiety between first culture and dominant culture. Acculturation leads to isolation from dominant culture at the same time as feelings of marginalization from the ethnic community. Further, "assimilation causes the greatest stress by pulling away from ethnic ties" (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004, p. 71). A summary statement explaining the differences between acculturation, assimilation, and integration is paraphrased in the following statement:

Acculturation—the transference of cultural components from dominant to minority groups—causes stress, which is indicative of the internal anxiety felt by those who feel isolated by being separated from the dominant culture and marginalized by not being active participants in their ethnic culture. Assimilation causes the greatest stress by pulling away from ethnic ties. Those who experience integration—who feel at home in both cultural environments—experience less stress, perhaps even a sense of belonging. (Krishnan & Berry as cited by Abdi & Ghosh, 2004, p. 71)

During the acculturation process some immigrants may experience what is considered cultural bereavement (Eisenburch, 1990). Eisenbruch has defined cultural bereavement as:

The experience of the uprooted person—or group—resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values and self-identity: the person—or group—continues to live in the past, is visited by supernatural forces from the past while asleep or awake, suffers feeling of guilt over abandoning culture and homeland, feels pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but finds constant images of the past (including traumatic images: intruding into daily life, yearns to complete obligations to the dead, and feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life. (p. 717)

Along with language learning integration may be viewed as the root to success in Canada. Gunderson (2007) emphasizes its importance and connection to language learning, "Indeed, many authors have suggested that failing to acculturate often is associated with failure to learn a second language" (p. 53). Gunderson, too, describes a difference between acculturation and assimilation:

Acculturation is a term that refers to the notion that an individual from one culture must adapt to a new culture. The term assimilation refers to the case in which an individual's first culture is submerged in the new culture and there is often a loss of first cultural values, beliefs, and behavior patterns. (p. 53)

Gunderson suggests four stages of acculturation: euphoria, culture shock, recovery, and acculturation. He notes that these stages are not particularly precise and individuals move through these stages at varying paces and may, in fact, regress to past stages throughout the acculturation process. Variations in the stages occur between different cultures. For Berry (1990), acculturation is a term used to articulate a culture change that results from "continuous, first-hand contact between two distinct cultural groups" (p. 91). He proceeds to highlight a shift in viewing acculturation as a group-level process to one that is now widely viewed as an individual-level phenomenon. Changes that occur on an individual level include changes in values, abilities and motives (Berry, 1990) where existing identities and attitudes change and new ones develop. According to Berry during the process of acculturation stress phenomena and related pathology occur. Newcomers are placed in the position of determining what aspects of their first culture to suppress or abandon, a sense of cultural bereavement, and which areas of the new culture will be embraced or rejected. Berry clarifies where adaptation fits in to this process, "Adaptation is the generic term used here to refer to both the process of dealing with acculturation and the outcome of acculturation" (p. 92). He views adaptation as both a process and an outcome. Berry provides a useful model to demonstrate four varieties of acculturation: Assimilation, Integration, Separation, and Marginalization. These options are based upon a newcomer's response and choice to maintain cultural identity and characteristics, and to consider it to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups. In this model the integration option assumes the retention of the original cultural identity while simultaneously moving into the larger society.

The outcome of acculturation is a complex synthesis of cultures. Acculturation, the term used by Gunderson (2007), is not straightforward; however, it is worth examining as the link between acculturation or integration and school success is well founded:

The degree to which students are successful in school, especially related to second-language acquisition, will be related to the degree to which they become acculturated, according to this model—the four stages. (p. 53)

In a multi-case study, Gunderson found that immigrant students were convinced that they would learn English better by integrating with and communicating with native English speakers, but they were unable to do so. He noted two conundrums based on this. The first conundrum states that students complained that in an English-only school system they could not find native English speakers to interact with and communicate in English. The second conundrum noted that the language of the school community was often not English noting that often the teacher was their only interaction with a native English speaker (Gunderson, 2007). These two conundrums would most certainly delay the process of integration. Successful integration requires not only the development of the language of the host country but also successful interaction with the new culture without forfeiting one's first culture. The host country definitely influences this process.

Korac's (2003) comparative research study examined differences in refugee reception in two countries: the Netherlands and Italy. The sample refugees for both studies were from the same country of origin: the former Yugoslavia. For Korac:

Integration is used to describe the process of change that occurs when two cultures are forced to co-exist within one society. Within this framework, the authors examine processes such as assimilation and acculturation and are concerned with issues of identity, belonging, recognition and self-respect. (p. 52)

She further states that the problem of integration is not only conceptual but also has practical elements as well. Her study highlights the differences within the European context of the concept of reception and points out that in 2001 the European Commission, which focuses on reception policies, advocated for the implementation of specialized services to facilitate settlement of refugees (Korac, 2003). Korac is

concerned with the 2-way process of integration whereby the onus is not entirely on the immigrant, but responsibility extends to the host society to play a role in the reception part of the integration process—hence the 2-way process. A general discouragement of top-down, and as she describes a “medicated to fit in” (p. 53) approaches are clear. This study involved an ethnographic methodology in its design to specifically elicit the experiences and voice of the refugees interviewed.

Increasingly immigrants are connected to their culture of origin by means of easy access to communication: email, Facebook, Internet, Skype, multi-lingual newspapers, to name some. This has enabled for a continuous connection to both cultures making the concept of integration that much more evasive. According to some researchers this distinction between the old country and new is no longer clear, therefore, lending to the concept of “transnationalism” (Stone, Gomez, Hotzoglou, & Lipnitsky, 2005). As people move physically and transition emotionally between cultures the notion of a stable identity becomes problematic. Accordingly, “Given the globalization of families, the challenge before family scholars, practitioners, and educators is to think differently about difference” (Dalla, Defrain, Johnson, & Abbott, 2009, p. 71). For those involved in the process it is necessary to allow for and realize that connections to country of origin are more pervasive than ever before.

There are two positions involved in the integration process: host society and newcomer. Various stances have been taken when establishing the responsibilities or impact of either side. Most research assumes the reciprocal nature of the integration process and posits that both sides require adjustments (Gunderson, 2007; Korac, 2003; Reitz, 2002; Rutter & Jones, 1998; Wong & Poisson, 2008). As immigration is an ongoing and increasingly global concern, interest in the impact of host societies on immigrants has gained well-founded attention. Reitz (2002) claims that, “Pre-existing ethnic attitudes, as well as inter-group boundaries and hierarchies, provide the social framework with-in which integration processes occur” (p. 1005). He follows with the notion that these frameworks may give rise to formal and informal institutional arrangements that may impact opportunities available to newcomers. Depending on the pre-existing ethnic attitudes the impact may be both positive and negative. The pre-existing ethnic attitudes found in this study provide a positive framework to assist newcomer integration. In her quest to grapple with the concept of integration Dawn Allen (2006) highlights the need to determine where the integration takes place: newcomer,

host, or both? Often the assumption is that it is the role of the newcomer to integrate into the host culture, which in some ways abdicates the responsibility of the recipient or host culture. Allen makes a distinction between integration and inclusion; whereby integration belongs to the subject (newcomer) and inclusion the role of the object (host culture). This statement provides a clear delineation between the intended outcomes of integration for both the newcomer and the host country. The delineation between inclusion and integration and where the responsibility lands is a useful distinction to make when working through an understanding of the complexities of integration and further supports current beliefs that the host country plays a crucial role in the successful integration of immigrants.

It is important to place the concept of integration outside of understandings of acculturation and assimilation. As stated earlier, I favour using the term integration as it does not have connotations of one or the other culture but rather a intermixing of two cultures. Integration strives to re-invent one's sense of self within a new context rather than exchange one culture for another. Integration is more akin to identity construction than to assimilation and acculturation. The process is long and often fraught with conflict, antagonistic experiences, and many temporary setbacks (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004). Multicultural education programs are viewed as places where a pluralistic outlook and acceptance of diversity may be valuable starting points to facilitate and encourage identity construction leading to integration. Finally, integration may be viewed as:

The extent to which immigrants and their descendants integrate into an existing societal culture and come to view their life-chances as tied up with participation in the range of social institutions, based on a common language, which define that societal culture. (Kymlicka, 1998, p. 28)

It is important to understand the historical connection Canada has with immigration. As a country built on immigration it is natural that issues of settlement and integration have, and continue to hold, great importance in the development of this country. This overall context is crucial to understanding how a program such as SWIS would be conceived. It is not uncommon that refugees are located on the settlement to integration continuum in areas that are not at an adequate standard in comparison to mainstream immigrants. To move along the continuum to successful integration most immigrants encounter many barriers. These barriers are significant for refugees and need to be examined in

isolation of other immigrants. The next section explores the unique settlement experience of the refugee population.

3.4. Refugee Settlement

Diversity in B.C. schools is an overarching concept that reflects a philosophy of equitable participation and an appreciation of the contributions of all people. It is a concept that refers both to our uniqueness as individuals and to our sense of belonging or identification within a group or groups. (BC Ministry of Education, n.d., p. 7)

This statement attests to the pervasive and significant contribution diversity plays in British Columbian schools. How an educational system manages this diversity is an area of ongoing concern for our school communities. There are many barriers preventing immigrant students, in particular refugees, from equitable participation in school at least at the early stages of arrival. Many barriers exist alongside the obvious language barrier that makes settlement and integration for refugees very complex. It is necessary to note that language is an ongoing challenge in all aspects of day-to-day life. To assume that learning the language of a host country will be sufficient to integrate into a society would be a misconception. Language learning is just one of the struggles facing immigrant students in schools and immigrants into a host society in general. The barriers are many and complex as immigrant students attempt to navigate between one culture and language to another. Language learning is the most ubiquitous barrier, but beneath the surface are barriers related to culture, identity, and community.

There is a point in the settlement process where refugees may not be equipped to begin the settlement process. There are a variety of reasons for this, but fundamentally it is due to core gaps in experience and concept attainment around basic needs that a host society may take for granted. In a guidebook produced by the BC Ministry of Education (2009), the following point suggests the starting position of some of our refugee students and their families:

Along with overall settlement issues, students with refugee experience are grappling with many aspects of adjustment when they come to a new country, including those associated with self, family, school, and society. (p. 9)

The settlement process is unique for each immigrant and presents many barriers. In the case of refugee students and their families the settlement process is fraught with many challenges and complexities. Refugee students arrive with challenges and barriers to integration and settlement that extend beyond just knowledge of English. According to Rutter and Jones (1998):

Refugee children are now:

Likely to be living in conditions of continual stress caused by uncertainty about their future, thus compounding possible trauma experienced in home country;

Likely to be living in various forms of temporary accommodation and likely to be very mobile as a result

More likely to be attending unpopular schools in the local authority, because of their mobility

(p. 4)

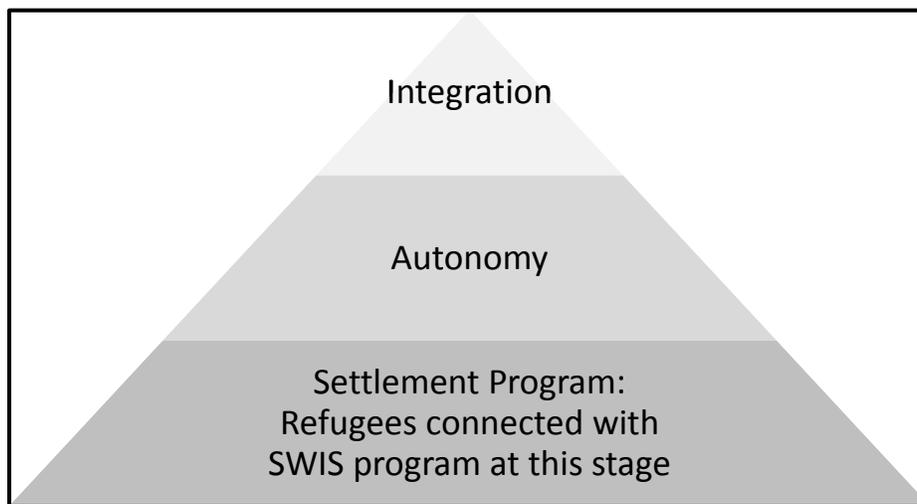
Settlement for refugees begins at a point of disadvantage and added complexities not present in mainstream immigrants for whom immigration was a choice, albeit not an easy one, and returning to the country of origin likely remains an option. The early stages of arrival to the host country may be fraught with fear, anxiety, a sense of being overwhelmed, and many other emotions related to stress. Additionally, many arrive in poor health. The major difference is that for refugees, compared with those who actively pursue immigration, immigration was not necessarily a choice nor did they have the ability to prepare for immigration. Barriers to settlement may be impacted by past experiences as refugees in their home country. For example, refugees fleeing political situations or natural disasters resulting in a sudden and profound upheaval of their lives will have different levels of stress from those who have spent their entire lives in refugee camps with no other life experience to draw from. For the former issues of mistrust due to past experience with corrupt government regimes may be present along with a significant change in roles within a structured society as they may be used to a comfortable lifestyle in their country of origin prior to their displacement—a lifestyle they cannot duplicate in their new country. In this case they may have been employed in a professional occupation prior to being uprooted and now find themselves unemployed and unable to enter one's field in the host country. This is very different than the refugee

who has never experienced life outside of a camp. In both cases the stress is significant, yet the root causes may be different.

For refugees claiming refugee status life in the new country presents even more profound challenges. For this classification of refugee there is a significant level of uncertainty that compounds the situations outlined above. This group of refugees are in some ways in a state of limbo. Limited services are accessible to them and they may be living in constant fear of deportation. Refugee claimants must await a hearing date in which their claim is accepted or denied. During this time they have limited health care protection and are not offered all the same services provided to other refugees, Government Assisted Refugees, for example.

It is at this juncture that SWIS workers first encounter the refugee families they work with. Figure 3.2 is the taxonomy used in this paper to express various stages of settlement for refugees. The initial stages demonstrate a flow upwards to the integration phase. Currently, the SWIS program is predicated on immigrants arriving who are prepared to initiate the settlement process.

Figure 3.2. Settlement Program: Current Mandate



This is an important starting point, as according to John Berry (1990), "By far most primary prevention is possible here, for at this point the host society formally accepts the

refugee as a potential citizen, usually with all the rights and freedoms granted to citizens” (p. 100). It is important to note that:

Despite these problems, reports (e.g., Beiser, Barwick, Berry, et al., 1988) indicate that most refugees settle without serious difficulty, given basic minimal services of language training, initial social and monetary support, and cultural orientation to the new society. (p.100)

The barriers exist, most certainly, yet as noted by Berry most refugees eventually do settle in the community; this was substantiated by the first-hand accounts articulated by the SWIS workers interviewed.

Health issues may pose tremendous barriers to successful settlement and eventual integration. Health in this instance refers to both mental and physical health. To understand some of the burden of being a refugee that is different from that of mainstream immigrants a concise overview and comparison is expressed in Table 3.2. A beginning point for this section is to consider some of the major differences between immigrants and refugees, in particular those differences that are likely at the root of much of the physical and certainly psychological health issues present in many refugees. Table 3.2 represents a synopsis of these differences as outlined in the BC Ministry of Education’s (2009) *Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools*:

Table 3.2. Refugees and Immigrants: Observation of Different Experiences

Immigrants	Refugees
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal business is taken care of before leaving home country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal business in the home country is left unsettled after leaving in a hurry.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education usually continues uninterrupted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education may be interrupted or postponed due to strife in home country or a wait in a refugee camp.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time to prepare for the transition allows for development of an awareness of their new country and its culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden transition to a new culture/country creates difficulties, confusion, or uncertainty.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of loss and trauma is not necessarily present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of loss and trauma may be profound; losses may include family members or personal property, and may have psychological impacts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Returning home is a personal choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Returning home is not an option unless the crisis situation has stabilized or ended.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Families are often intact, including parents and children, or other family members who are also caregivers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children may be without parents, or even family guardians.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrangements likely have been made for basic requirements, such as food, housing, and medical and dental care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic requirements, such as food, housing, and immediate medical and dental care, may be urgently needed.

Note. Adapted from p. 7.

As is demonstrated by this table there are many stress factors along with health needs that attest to the vulnerable nature of refugees. The starting point is far more profound and overwhelming for those that arrive in an uprooted state.

For refugees the changes and challenges of the new country may be devastating given the anguish they may have suffered previously. The very motivation behind refugee migration contrasts with that of mainstream immigrants. Westermeyer (1990) points to contrasts between refugees and immigrants, most notably, refugees have been “pushed out” of their country whereas immigrants have been “pulled out” by choice. A sense of longing for refugees is fraught with uncertainty if they can ever return home; mainstream immigrants are typically free to return to their country of origin at any time. The sense of planning for such a move is not part of the refugee experience, thus it is all too often a sudden fleeing. And perhaps the most difficult to endure is the loss of control of one’s own future and destiny (Westermeyer, 1990). Many of these problems manifest in physical or emotional illness. Acculturative stress is particularly noted by Berry (1990) as a debilitating condition where newcomers, in particular refugees, experience a

reduction in their health status including physical, psychological, and social aspects. Mental health status particularly manifests in confusion, anxiety, depression and feelings of marginality and alienation. Initial settlement for refugees is seemingly overwhelming and often fraught with health issues that impede the settlement process. John Berry (1990) states that:

Large numbers of these refugees have serious mental health problems arising from culture shock, discrimination, alienation, family disintegration, severe deprivation, and other terrifying experiences. Their needs for mental health services are immediate and urgent, but all too often language and cultural barriers have made it difficult, if not impossible, for them to obtain help. (p. viii)

Refugees are a particularly vulnerable group of immigrants and settlement services may play a crucial role in their journey toward integration.

While the conditions, which cause a person to become a refugee, like political unrest and long-term residence in a displaced persons camp are different, Fagen (1990) notes the process of becoming a refugee is difficult and to live as a refugee is stressful. As stated by Fagen in her opening comments:

To become a refugee is stressful. To live as a refugee is stressful. Refugee life combines the anxieties associated with being uprooted that immigrants are likely to feel with pervasive fear and uncertainty about one's future. (p. 7)

Stress-related problems for refugees were noted in every interview. For many, stress was the cause of physical and mental imbalance. As stated by Beiser (1990), "Migration is a condition of risk for developing mental disorder" (p. 52). Further to this statement Beiser re-examines the sequence of distress that affects many refugees post arrival. He reminds us of earlier authors (Meerloo, Pedersen, Tyhurst) who researched the psychological adjustment of refugees landing on widely accepted predictable stages marked by a stage of arrival euphoria lasting potentially 2 to 6 months followed by a stage of disillusionment—6 months to 2 years. This disillusionment period may be fraught with a strong risk of developing psychiatric disorders (Beiser, 1990). Beiser suggested:

The model posits a stage of six months to two years of disillusionment which creates a risk for developing psychiatric disorder. While most

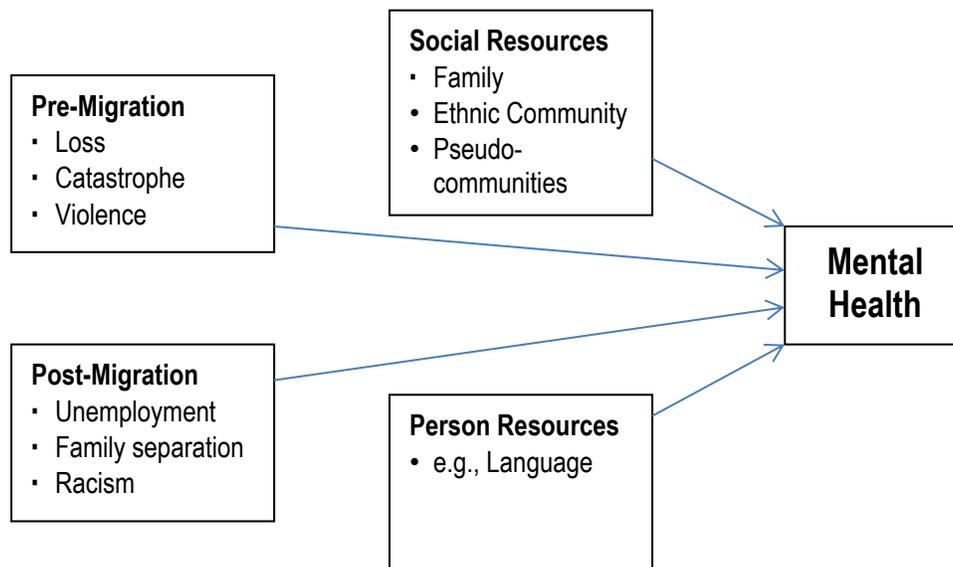
newcomers survive the phase of unhappiness to effect a realistic adjustment to their new environment, some become trapped in a cycle of despair, disorder, and compromised social behavior. This formulation implies that, during the second phase of resettlement, all newcomers will suffer psychological disequilibrium and, possibly, psychiatric disorder. (p. 52)

This claim may seem a bit overstated; however, Beiser noted that at the time of this claim research was based on very small numbers of immigrants and refugees and were mostly in psychiatric care. That said, Beiser goes on to discuss subsequent research that suggests stress levels remain very high amongst refugee populations and suggest that peak stress times occur between the 12- to 18-month and 10- to 12-month periods following immigration (p. 53). Noteworthy is Beiser's claim that the longer refugees stay in their host country the better their mental health. Mental health emerged in this research as a major concern for refugees and their families. As part of an introductory to *Mental Health of Immigrants and Refugees*, Siv (1990) states that, "Almost all refugees who arrive in the new world are shattered victims with little self-confidence or esteem" (1990, p. 4). Siv proceeds to say that refugees are thrust into a land of promise amongst confusion around all things new, while they are likely ill-equipped to meet everyday challenges, and as he notes it is no wonder that mental illness in this population is so high. He states, "They (refugees) are history's great underdogs" (p. 5).

As a former refugee himself, Siv (1990) indicates that the dull life of the refugee camp compounded with sitting around worrying about past and future could result in severe depression. There have been noted stages of stress for refugees as they first arrive in a new country. In an attempt to identify the high point of depression for refugees, an examination of community-based surveys suggested that psychiatric disorders were higher for refugees between 12 to 18 months after they arrived in the host country. A similar study conducted at The University of British Columbia, although not exact, also suggested a similar time line for psychiatric disorder placing the peak period between 10 to 12 months after arrival. Also reported is often a so-called honeymoon phase or period of euphoria experienced by refugees upon arrival to the host country. This early stage of settlement may be filled with feelings of relief, excitement, safety, and promise. Unfortunately, as the research suggests this phase wears off often transitioning to psychiatric disorders such as depression. Unemployment and family separation were identified as key areas that lead to depression (Beiser,

1990). According to Beiser, “Two of the most powerful and salient post-migration stresses are unemployment and separation from family” (p. 57). He notes that refugees experience high levels of unemployment in the first 5 to 10 years of resettlement. Unemployment is not just a financial concern, it affects the mental health of refugees, and likely most unemployed people as loss of employment may result in low self-esteem, lack of confidence, loss of structure to one’s life, and fewer opportunities to intermix with others. Separation from family contributes to poor mental health of refugees. Not only are there continual concerns and worries for those left behind, but also the resettled refugee has lost the familial support that can be so critical to one’s mental health. A framework for understanding what happens to refugees and how they respond to the process was adapted from a stress-process model and used to express the stresses of migration and resettlement for refugees (Beiser, 1990, p. 55).

Figure 3.3. Stresses of Pre- and Post-Migration and Resettlement Affecting Mental Health



Note. Adapted from a stress process model (Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan, & Mullen, 1981).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; American Psychiatric Association’s official term based on the DSM III R) is a frequent mental health issue for refugees. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder denotes stresses related to traumatic events beyond what would be conceived as a usual human experience. Often PTSD can be a result of torture, rape, exposure to war, or other extreme physical hardships endured by refugees while in their country of origin. The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT), an organization

founded in the mid-1970s, recognized the severity of mental health issues amongst a very vulnerable population: refugees. The Centre was the second organization directly dealing with victims of torture initiated in a refugee-receiving nation (the other being the Rehabilitation Centre for Torture in Denmark). Originally the centre was anticipated to service the needs of a relatively small percentage of the total refugee population; however, as the program expanded it serviced the needs of many more refugees arriving from situations of torture or similar extreme circumstances (CCVT, 2000). Since its inception the Centre has now serviced over 11,000 survivors from 99 countries. One of the major premises behind the structure of the CCVT is the linking of volunteers with refugees. This program recognizes that:

The fundamental issue in refugee resettlement is how to reconstruct with refugees the reality and capacity for interpersonal ties and how to foster an alternative web of relations in the host community. (p. 6)

This statement recognizes the difficulties facing refugees and that by connecting refugees with volunteers in the community there may be better transition for these survivors. The CCVT has a “Befriending” program aimed at connecting survivors with volunteers of the host community. This supports the notion that there is a reception piece to the settlement process that is, for this group in particular, key to long-term adjustment to a new country and culture. As stated in the report, “Understanding how ties can be rebuilt at the interpersonal and community levels and fostering these are crucially important” (pp. 6-7). Beiser (1990) claims that connecting to community has a positive impact on the mental health of refugees. He indicates that:

For refugees without family, local ethnic communities can help replace lost familial and social networks. For those fortunate enough to have migrated with their families, the ethnic community provides an additional source of support. (p. 58)

This relates to the work of the SWIS workers as they too are tasked, although not as volunteers, with providing that befriending piece that is so crucial in particular with our most vulnerable refugees. In reference to the “Befriending” program:

Training contents are clustered around this idea of ever-widening webs of relations: starting from the nature and dynamics of the befriending relationship between the client and volunteer, to organizational support for the construction and maintenance of those ties (particularly through

sustained staff involvement and other means in the environment of the organization), to an expanding web of relations into the community at large. (CCVT, 2002, p. 7)

This web of relations quite simply reflects the overall mandate of the SWIS program's initiative which is to help newcomers adjust to their new life in Canada by connecting families to services and assisting them in their day-to-day interactions in the new community. Beginning with the first point of contact—schools—clients in this SWIS program are directed to a centrally-located facility and connected with a SWIS worker who then works on expanding the webs of relationships for the families they serve, whether school relationships, family relationships, or community relationships. This, in theory, serves as an expansion of the webs of relationships beginning with SWIS workers and schools and eventually reaching out to community agencies and helping families adjust to their new environment. As SWIS workers are school district employees this enables them access to schools at a critical time of settlement and beginning stage of expanding relationships.

In a study of refugee integration into schools, and in particular secondary school drop-out rates, Gunderson (2007) noted a group of Russian refugees who felt unsupported in their new country and felt as though they were being treated as second-class citizens; some noted that dogs were treated better than they felt they were (Gunderson, 2007). This particular group of refugees were housed in a monthly-rental hotel in which they were all living together, thus providing little opportunity for speaking English or integrating with the host society:

Russian immigrants interviewed for this study were very verbal about their unhappiness with life and held great disregard for Canada, for the city, for the schools, for the neighbourhood in which they lived, and for the way in which they felt they were regarded by teachers, administrators, and others. (p. 199)

This outlook held by this particular group supports the high drop-out rate for the Russian students, as “Russian students had a great deal of difficulty, and their disappearance from the school system does not auger well for their potential success in Canadian society” (p. 203). This example is cited as not only an exemplar of where perceived positive relationships to the host country did not exist ultimately resulting in poor

settlement, but also an indicator as to how crucial the settlement phase in general can lead to a positive school experience.

3.4.1. Refugee Student Settlement and Integration into Schools

Part of the initial culture shock for refugees, as with other immigrants, is adjusting to the new education system. Some studies unveiled profound insights from students immersed in the integration process. Some insightful comments emerged from Gunderson's (2007) research suggesting that both students and parents believed the teaching and learning going on in their host school was inferior to that which they were accustomed. Gunderson highlighted a young student's (male, Hong Kong, 14 years) feelings about the education system in Canada, "The schools are so bad in Canada, you get too much freedom and all the parents think it's bad" (p. 5). Concepts of teaching and learning vary between cultures and need to be part of the dissemination of information that is reported to host country schools. For refugee students there may be enormous gaps in their prior learning; in fact, some may have not experienced formal schooling at all. Many English Language Learners (ELL) students are often from strong middle-class backgrounds in their country of origin and are assumed to integrate in language and culture within an approximate 3-year timeframe. This is not the case for refugee students who will require much support focussing on some core deficiencies they may exhibit due to disrupted or non-existent prior educational knowledge and skills in addition to potential physical and mental health issues that may be present. This lack of educational experience places refugee students and their families in a vulnerable position.

According to Epstein's (2001) model of home-school partnerships, "The theory of overlapping spheres of influence sets the child at the center of the internal structure of the model" (p. 83). Epstein's framework demonstrates the interconnectedness of home/school and community partnerships in relation to student success. This conceptual framework provides an understanding of how essential these partnerships can be. With the child as the 'go-between' acting as both the messenger and the message between family and school (Montandon & Perrenoud, 1986) this role is crucial for transmitting information from home to school and from school to home. Communication between school, student, and family include written, verbal, and non-verbal expressions. Epstein (2001) notes how students express their experiences:

Their attitudes, facial expressions, and body language also tell a great deal about their experiences at home, at school, and in the community. At different times and in many ways students speak for themselves, for their teachers, and for their parents. (p. 83)

For refugee students and their families the framework of overlapping spheres of influence and communicative interaction is challenging at best as many of the key understandings that assist in a healthy relationship are predicated on shared common understandings, values, and experiences. Many of the home/school processes are oriented toward a common school experience or expectations that fundamental understandings of school are in place in the home environment. For example, the concept of a daily planner or agenda assumes that the parents or guardians know how to use this mechanism of communication regardless of language barriers. For many refugee families this will not be the case. At the extreme there may be families who have never been in a formal classroom environment and their whole life to date has been planned for them in refugee camps. Thus the concept of planning and taking responsibility for one's learning may again be incongruent with the assumed settlement level of the family. Indeed the concept of time may be absent or different culminating in misunderstandings, lateness, and absenteeism. An extreme example of this would be those who have spent time in a displaced persons or refugee camp where time may have been measured by a series of daily queues for provisions and services and bookmarked by dawn and dusk as daytime indicators.

Ruth Whiteman (2005) examined the current integration system in 53 schools in Newcastle Upon Tyne, England to determine teachers' views of the integration process of refugee students. The research identified key areas to improve the integration process enabling refugee students to begin their education in an environment that fosters caring relationships that help refugee students adapt to their current circumstances and begin to accept and overcome their past. Analyses of data suggest that several key themes emerged as major areas for improvement. These included:

Dissemination of information to staff—require more background information including: language and other educational needs; medical history; family situation, immigration status, previous schooling, and background information on country of origin.

Training needs were identified as problematic by a large number of schools.

Access to resources including interpreters and psychologist.

Negative perceptions of immigrants as portrayed through media or negative parental views.

Integration may mean different things in different contexts. These findings suggest teachers may feel better equipped to deal with refugee students if more student information were communicated, additional training specific to refugee or asylum seekers were provided, and better resources made available. Rutter and Jones (1998) noted:

Teachers may sometimes show a reluctance to develop an understanding of the experience of refugees. Fear of being overwhelmed by the complexity of their situation, their needs and their anxieties, may cause some professionals to withdraw or distance themselves.

Refugee students certainly can pose a challenge in the classroom, and not understanding their situation does not assist teachers in developing classroom strategies to help the refugee student adjust. Information on a refugee student that might impact the student's learning and ability to adjust such as past trauma, family separation, PTSD, for example, would benefit teachers enormously as they attempt to understand why the student is withdrawn, crying frequently, or apparently adjusting fine until a certain trigger will initiate a reminder of a past trauma resulting in a change of behaviour. The SWIS program attempts to facilitate communication dissemination to ensure a steady flow of information is conveyed between immigrant families and the schools. In this school district it was noted by the SWIS workers who were interviewed that the schools are very receptive to their services and value the work they do in terms of assisting the communication process and ensuring it is accurate and reflective of the student needs or school requirements. What is certainly valuable in the case of communication is the ability of the SWIS worker to speak the language of the client and translate their needs, concerns, and successes back to the school. SWIS workers have an important role in providing the communication link between home and school and may be a good solution for some of the barriers that teachers identified impacting their ability to prepare themselves to meet the needs of their refugee students as reported in Ruth Whiteman's (2005) research.

Whiteman's (2005) research revealed areas in which teachers viewed information was lacking: language needs; additional special education needs; medical history/current health problems; current family situation; immigration status; background information on country of origin; and information regarding previous schooling. Whiteman's identification of these areas as being vital to a better understanding for teachers is very much in line with the current work of the SWIS workers in the school district in this research. SWIS workers are able to provide information regarding current and relevant information of individual families to schools directly, whereas in the past this information would have been obtained by individual school administration, counsellors, and teachers. The current process in this school district is that all newcomer families, upon making contact with the schools, are directed to a central location where students' language levels are assessed, and families are interviewed and introduced to a SWIS worker who is able to get accurate information through a common language which can then be parlayed to the schools. This research did not delve into the effects of SWIS worker's involvement and school understanding of immigrants specifically, yet the stories revealed by SWIS workers indicated that their involvement with schools has been positive and beneficial to the home/school relationship.

Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti, and Solheim (2004) developed a hypothesis model outlining factors that predict school adjustment of immigrant adolescents. This study is noteworthy as it looks at self-esteem and self-mastery as being pivotal to alleviating psychological stresses. This research is connected to the concept of identity and health making it a useful study to draw upon. The study examined factors predicting school adjustment for 175 immigrant Vietnamese students in Finland. They looked at an integrative model that included the acquisition of skills needed to participate in the host culture along with adherence to student's own traditional cultural patterns and how this impacts identity. Conceptually, this is a blending of both socio-cultural and psychological adaptations. Socio-cultural and psychological adaptation may be defined as different phenomena, yet this Finish study offers an opportunity to examine the interaction of these factors. Socio-cultural phenomena is represented by external factors linking individuals to their new context, including their ability to deal with daily problems, particularly in the areas of family, work, and school; whereas, psychological adaptation focuses on a sense of personal and cultural sense of self, health, and personal satisfaction in the new cultural context. Liebkind et al. cite Berry as suggesting,

“Psychological adaptation refers to ‘a set of psychological outcomes including a sense of personal and cultural identity, good mental health, and the achievement of personal satisfaction in the new cultural context’ (Berry, 1997, p. 14)” (p. 636). The authors highlight the interconnectedness between social-cultural and psychological and state that the two must be intertwined (Liebkind et al., 2004).

When viewed separately, socio-cultural adjustment may be represented by the ability to deal with daily problems and has typically been measured by school achievement or educational attainment. However, immigrant students may be viewed as adjusting socio-culturally, yet psychologically there may be little school adjustment as represented by mental health problems. Using a hypothetical model, the researchers’ results emphasized the role of increased self-esteem and self-mastery as key to decreasing psychological stresses. Further, language skills, perceived parental support, and a clear ethnic identity play a critical role in positive self-esteem and self-mastery. The researchers argue that consideration of both phenomena can lead to more accurate factors for predicting school adjustment. This notion of blending psychological with social provides many barriers for refugee students in schools. Again, as noted by SWIS workers often times the students would suffer a sense of lack of belonging yet appear to be doing well. One particular story makes this point:

One case one of my clients that I got a call from school from counsellor and that counsellor was saying that one of the kids they are they have found that she was so happy and bubbly and doing this that and now she’s failing to do even show up at school. (Oliver, October 2011)

In this instance socially the child was adapting well to the school environment; however, psychologically she was deeply traumatized to the point of being homebound due to her family’s possible deportation from Canada. Clearly in this example the psychological stresses were evident particularly those stresses related to self-esteem, self-mastery, and a clear ethnic identity. For this particular student the uncertainty of her home and future made school adjustment illusive. They ultimately were accepted into Canada and not deported; however, the psychological impact associated with the anxieties of waiting for a life-altering decision created a barrier for this child and had an impact on her success and adjustment to school.

There are often high rates of non-attendance for refugee students. This may be a result of transiency as difficulties securing accommodation for families translate into difficulties securing education as children may be uprooted and move schools one or more times (Rutter & Jones, 1998, p. 127). What Rutter and Jones are suggesting here is that initially some refugee families experience transiency and therefore their children may move schools throughout a school year, which is difficult for most students in general. Absenteeism from school has been reported as a serious concern amongst educators. In his case study, Gunderson (2007) noted a high drop-out rate in particular citing Vietnamese students in his secondary sample:

Their difficulty with English, their difficulty with examinable courses, their difficulty fitting into secondary schools, all resulted in a very high drop-out rate. Indeed, at about Grade 10, the number of Vietnamese students who disappeared from the sample was dramatic. (p. 206)

He further cites the high drop-out rates demonstrated by students from Iraq. In this particular sample of Iraqi students 95% of the students were refugees. Gunderson attributes the difficulties faced by Spanish and Vietnamese-speaking students to their socio-economic backgrounds. For the most part, he claims, such students came from poor refugee families for whom education was not a priority or a tradition. This high dropout rate is a major indicator that future income opportunities will be limited. In some cases, due to lack of other opportunities, these students may choose to participate in illegal activities to earn money. Early intervention is critical in preventing these high drop-out rates. Although Gunderson's research did not examine how SWIS worker's role may contribute to early intervention and identification of students at risk of dropping out, I would argue that this would potentially be the case.

As discussed in this section the home/school relationship is important. Clear communication lines between home and school and active parent participation in their children's education have a positive impact on student achievement. This case study revealed that the home/school relationship is not always solid with refugee families and for refugee students integrating into the school system is fraught with cultural misunderstandings and differing views on education. The first-hand accounts of situations where the home/school relationship understandings were not in place, or the background and experience with schools did not exist made this a compelling situation and worth reporting as a major theme. Returning to the Ministry goals outlined earlier

around student adjustment in schools, indeed this is an important theme to discuss. Yet ultimately, it is important to note, many of the students and the families do succeed and many times the SWIS workers reported these successes. Social partnerships are increasingly considered in education. Fix et al. (2001) suggests:

In education, these social partnerships exist beyond the formal institutions of education and training and are commonly targeted to enhance learning opportunities for young people and adults who are seen to be 'at risk' of falling between the cracks of education, training and employment. (p. 27)

In the case of SWIS workers, an important aspect of their day-to-day work is connecting families with services in the community. This partnered approach benefits students, schools, and the community by ensuring that services are utilized by their intended recipients. As the school is the first point of contact for most immigrants the "falling between the cracks" situation is minimized. Fix et al. (2001) outline reasons why a school district could expand its mandate to provide such services:

From an *institutional* perspective, mainstream institutions (e.g., public schools, welfare offices, job training centers) offer advantages: They (1) typically have comparatively deep institutional capacity; (2) have developed bureaucratic structures (accounting, personnel offices, and the like); (3) are often bound by established due process norms and procedures that can limit arbitrariness; and (4) frequently have developed political constituencies. (p. 17)

Schools, today, therefore, are subject to considerable pressures to deliver core government policies in relation to standards, whilst also responding to initiatives to reduce truancy and exclusions. The school agenda is already a very crowded one with tensions such as those between raising standards and tackling social exclusion (Featherstone & Manby, 2006).

3.4.2. Cultural Bereavement for Refugees

The refugee experience, as examined by Baker et al. (1983), is essentially described as one that involves loss:

Loss of what is obvious, tangible and external such as possessions, a home, work, role, status, life style, a language, loved members of the family or other close relationships; and loss that is less obvious, 'internal'

and 'subjective' such as loss of trust in self and others, loss of self-esteem, self-respect and personal identity.

A difficult loss to bear is the loss of family; unfortunately not uncommon in the refugee experience. Oftentimes families are separated and out of communication with one another. Many refugees to Canada have left family behind. Beiser (1990) notes:

Separation from family is a potent stressor. Refugees who are victims of such separations have higher levels of psychological distress and experience more social dysfunction than those living with or close to their families. (p. 58)

Beiser goes on to cite cases of wife abuse that may have been prevented had extended family been available for support (Beiser, 1990). Whatever type of loss a refugee student may be experiencing this sense of loss can lead to difficulties in school having a negative impact on school adjustment and academic achievement. Further in an American study aimed at looking at emotional and educational barriers for refugee students in US schools the author, McBrien (2005) noted:

Eisenbruch (1988) found that not only personal bereavement but also cultural bereavement is an important factor in a refugee child's adjustment. Basing his work on the theories of Erikson, Eisenbruch noted the significance of "uprooting" as a disruption of a person's concept of self. Eisenbruch stated that adolescents may have difficulty in balancing loyalty to family with the American ideal of individual progress. He concluded that schools can be centers for acculturation that, with effective teachers and programs, can reduce environmental barriers and increase the child's sense of competence. (p. 34)

Feelings of loss are likely more pervasive in the refugee population as immigration was not a personal choice, and returning to one's country of origin is not certain. Yet despite some of the many challenges facing refugee students and their teachers, it is worthwhile to note the positive qualities attributed to refugee students in schools. As noted by Rutter and Jones (1998):

Most teachers who have refugee students in their classes do not see them as problem students. Individual refugee students, like individual non-refugee students, may have various learning and other educational difficulties and needs, but refugee students also bring into the classroom a range of opportunities and perspectives that can enrich the learning and understandings of everyone working there. (p.132)

Following this observation Rutter and Jones pose the question that if refugee students have potential to offer positive contributions to the classroom, what are the barriers that prevent that potential from being revealed and utilized? One of the points noted in this study was that better induction practices helps to ease the many barriers facing refugees. This is a valid point to highlight as the SWIS program certainly strives to improve the induction of newcomer students into schools and SWIS workers serve in a role to assist the schools with an overall better understanding of the backgrounds of students and their families.

3.4.3. Refugee Identity

An aspect of immigrant settlement is the navigation of a new or altered identity. For refugees the navigation between cultures is also a barrier to successful settlement and integration. Immigrant and refugee students are thrust into formulating or adjusting their identity to fit in to the new environment. Unlike their parents, there is no way they can avoid interacting with the dominant culture; they must attend school; whereas, their parents can exist within the host community without having to interact at the same level of intensity that their children face at school. Thus schools play an important role:

The aim of multicultural education is to help all children develop identities that will give them a positive self-concept, and make them critical and transformative citizens in democratic, multicultural societies (Davidman and Davidman, 2000). (cited in Abdi & Ghosh, 2004, p. 70)

This statement is not intended to focus on ethnicities and heritage (Abdi & Ghosh, 2004) but rather deeper consideration is placed on the importance of the role of educators to focus on students' self-concept (personal identity) and ethnic (social) identity to see how these two constructs merge in a school environment. Abdi and Ghosh (2004) make a solid case that this is a crucial role for schools:

The daily experiences that shape the identity of minority group students, the psych-social impact of prejudice, and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, and class, are of great significance, more so with the increasing ethnic and racial makeup of schools and society. Key questions relate to the implications of identity for integration with and relationship to the dominant culture. (p. 73)

As our schools are increasingly diverse it is now necessary to address concepts of identity and belonging. Identity is a complex and dynamic process, one that is nicely articulated by Abdi and Ghosh in this statement:

The process of identity construction, especially in immigrants, may not be enveloped by tranquil cultural parameters, but could be laden with antagonistic encounters, and with at least temporary identity upheavals. (p. 70)

Belonging in this context will be viewed as a sense that one has membership in a given community and full access to participation in that community. The development of self is extremely complex and poses perhaps one of the most significant barriers facing immigrant and refugee students, and for that matter, their families as they attempt to navigate their new roles and identities in a new country. Presumably, SWIS workers will have had their own struggles with identity and concepts of self and will instinctively recognize these challenges and respond and guide their clients through the process. Having had a similar experience may assist them in anticipating problems and therefore be in a position to be proactive rather than reactive.

Part of a positive home/school relationship stems from a positive self-identity of the student and a sense of belonging in the school community and beyond. As Gunderson (2007) states schools are, “also institutions where young human beings interact with other young human beings and significant adults. Students spend many hours growing up in schools. Both their minds and their bodies undergo miraculous changes” (p. 248). Part of this miraculous change is in part due to the formation of one’s identity in relation to others and ultimately feeling a connection or sense of belonging with one’s peer group and beyond. For Taylor (1994) identity is twofold with individual and collective identities emerging concurrently. One must navigate how one’s own perception of self-interacts with a collective or societal norm that is apparent in every culture. There is a link between recognition and identity, as Taylor suggests:

The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the *mis*recognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people of society around them mirror back to them confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. (p. 25)

As indicated by this quote recognition and identity is not only complex but can have very harsh and negative consequences if one does not feel recognized for who they are and their place in their community. The formulation of one's identity is complicated enough. For the immigrant population this process is further strained. This discussion will look at the complexities of adjusting one's current sense of self and identity to fitting in and belonging to the new environment and the implication this has for students.

The aspect of identity that assists in understanding the role of SWIS workers as cultural mediators and how they play a role in the transition to school is to examine how educators and school communities are key to the concept of identity. Immigrant and refugee students are thrust into formulating or adjusting their identity to fit the new environment. Schools play an important role, "The aim of multicultural education is to help all children develop identities that will give them a positive self-concept, and make them critical and transformative citizens in democratic, multicultural societies" (Abdi & Ghosh, 2004, p. 73). This does not mean to focus on ethnicities and heritage alone (Abdi & Ghosh, 2004) but rather a deeper consideration on the educator's part to focus on students' self-concept (identity) and ethnic (social) identity to see how these two constructs merge in a school environment. Abdi and Ghosh (2004) make a solid case that this is a crucial role for schools:

The differences in the cultural content of minority culture children, resulting in differences in communication and interaction styles, cognitive and learning styles, make it necessary for the teacher, as mediator in the education process, to develop a knowledge base on which to build understanding. Knowledge of students is imperative if teachers are to guide their learning experiences and lead students to see the connection between what is learned in school and their lived experiences. Education is not merely collecting disjointed knowledge; rather, it is acquiring conceptual schemes. Learning is to connect and to make meaning, and must be built on students' experiences and what they know. It behooves us as educators to understand student experiences, and how identities are produced differently. (p. 75)

Education and society are connected in complex ways. Education is acquired under social circumstances. Academic preparation is of great importance as we maintain and attempt to increase our literate population; however, schools have a responsibility to educate students about the complexities of society and to help equip students to live in a democratic, multicultural, globalized society. Abdi and Ghosh (2004) succinctly state:

The common aim of multicultural education programs should be a pluralistic outlook, and the development of a positive self-concept in minority group children. Specifically, this deals with student attitudes, and involves student self-esteem and identity. Positive aspects of these constructs require positive conceptions of one's racial, ethnic gender and class affiliation through the school. The question, then, is how can educators facilitate student attempts at making sense of the self and the other in the process of empowerment. (p. 70)

This quotation is particularly compelling for refugee youth who are already coping with many challenges as outlined in the preceding discussion. For these students a sense of identity and belonging requires a certain reconstruction, as Bhabha states, "It is important to recognize that immigrants experience culture differently, and their construction of identity becomes a hybrid, being reproduced within a different framework, but still belonging to the dominant society" (as cited in Abdi and Ghosh, 2004, p. 67). Certainly, in the local context of this study, the British Columbia Ministry of Education's mandate for schools also recognize this importance of identity and belonging:

Diversity in B.C. schools is an overarching concept that reflects a philosophy of equitable participation and an appreciation of the contributions of all people. It is a concept that refers both to our uniqueness as individuals and to our sense of belonging or identification within a group or groups. (BC Ministry of Education, n.d., para. 1)

Most definitions of integration refer to a sense of belonging in a community or culture. A sense of belonging comes from a secure identity. In a paper presented by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2002) the following statement demonstrates the relevance of belonging:

Education has to take on the difficult task of turning diversity into a constructive contributory factor of mutual understanding between individuals and groups. Any educational policy must be able to meet the challenges of pluralism and enable everyone to find their place in the community to which they primarily belong and at the same time be given the means to open up to other communities. (p. 46)

This mutual understanding between individuals and groups is attained by acceptance of diverse backgrounds and beliefs, and as stated, educational policy can contribute to the process by fostering diversity in school communities. Further, Abdi and Ghosh (2004)

speak of Paulo Freire's strong assertion of the important role that education can play in shaping and preparing for future multicultural generations.

In Paulo Freire's powerful words, learners, all learners, must prepare for the harnessing of tomorrow as a possible project. One of the most effective platforms to achieve this tomorrow, we suggest, is critically located multicultural education that, via inclusively polycentric praxis, speaks for, about, and to all students and by design and default, to their diverse world. (p. 179)

As suggested by this quotation a polycentric approach involves a large number of interlocking and interacting interests that contribute to diversity in schools.

With increased focus on citizenship, social responsibility, and diversity in our schools there is a need to ensure all students benefit not just those students who are being educated in their first language and culture. A multicultural education aims at developing identities that will enable positive self-concept and an understanding of a democratic and pluralistic society. This development is of particular concern for the immigrant and refugee student. The development of self relies on understanding social norms and having the ability to anticipate how others will act and engage under various social situations. For example, the student who stands at the classroom door waiting for the teacher to invite him/her in to the classroom will appear shy perhaps and even a little strange to the other students who know to come in to the classroom and choose a seat. In this case the perception of student behaviour is not consistent with the social norms of the host country; thus, sense of identity is impacted or forced to shift to a new and different student behavior. The so-called 'collective expectation' (Erikson & Weigard, 2003) may temporarily confuse the immigrant student and can manifest in the school environment as misunderstandings around the expected roles of teacher and student and may extend throughout the day-to-day relationship between student peers. For the refugee student these day-to-day interactions may cause great tension while the refugee student observes and must first learn the collective expectations before he/she develops his/her sense of self within these roles. Educators and others working with refugees must be aware of this challenge in order to enable these students to formulate a different identity in their new culture. In some ways this new shifting of identity parallels how children formulate their identity as they mature in their culture of origin. Eriksen and Weigard noted that children learn to see the many cultural expectations in terms of the

social group's or society's generalised expectations about what is perceived as appropriate behaviour in different situations.

As part of the integration process the immigrant student may need to be guided through the six stages of moral cognition as outlined by Kohlberg (1976). Kohlberg maintains individuals go through three levels of development between infancy and adulthood: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. Within each of these levels there are two stages thus, according to Kohlberg, human development goes through six stages. English Language Learners (ELL) would have already transitioned through some of these stages in their first culture and must now potentially progress through some of these levels within a new culture, only this time at an accelerated rate and no longer beginning from the infancy stage, while continuing to move through the stages where they are cognitively at despite the language/cultural barrier that has set them back. At a pre-conventional level he/she must learn new rules of acceptability and right and wrong. At a conventional level the ELL student begins to develop a "me" (Mead) perspective where the emergence of social expectations arises. Finally, at the post-conventional stage, "I" (Mead) the student may now have developed new values or principles mutually agreed upon. Kohlberg's model is a useful framework to understand the stages involved in determining a "new" identity for immigrants and refugees.

There are many undercurrents that impact the formulation of identity. In their report *From Immigration to Integration: A Report on Promising Practices in Integration*, Wong and Poisson (2008) state:

With respect to socio-cultural factors, many immigrant youth need to reconcile multiple identifications and value conflicts between family, peers, and institutions. Although schools are well-positioned to play a key role in facilitating the integration of immigrant youth, common issues facing newcomer youth include language barriers and the resulting social isolation from enrolling in English as a second language programs, as well as the lack of recognition of foreign educational qualifications. From a holistic perspective, the ability of immigrant youth to adapt to a new context is tied to the integration of parents and their expectations as poor economic outcomes for the parents can exacerbate the disconnection from family, the country of origin, and the host society, leading to alienation, poor academic performance, and deviant behaviour linked to issues with self-esteem. (pp. 13-14)

The authors further explain that the challenges for refugees are much more expansive as refugees may be dealing with health issues, trauma, loss or separation from family members, and in many cases poverty. Wong and Poisson (2008) note that:

Another key difference that must be considered when addressing the integration of refugees is the hope of returning to the country of origin, which may hinder any effort to facilitate their adaptation. (p. 59)

Adapting to the new culture and adjusting one's identity within that culture assists in a sense of belonging, and as noted by Jacobson, for refugees they may continuously contemplate if they will return to their country of origin. Most certainly, for refugee claimants this must likely be a persistent situation that impedes the settlement process and may create tentativeness when embracing the new culture.

Identity constructs are incredibly complicated and complex and it is difficult to achieve a sense of belonging until other areas of one's life are more stable. SWIS workers revealed through their experience working with refugees and their families that refugee needs were, in general, much greater than the needs of mainstream newcomers for whom coming to Canada was a deliberate choice. In fact, some noted that a small number of their overall caseload comprised of refugee families; however, these families demanded much of their attention and ultimately much of their time and resources. It is encouraging to note that despite the many challenges facing refugee families the SWIS workers in this study all indicated that over time successful settlement was occurring for these families and the students were ultimately adjusting to school. There was a consistent undercurrent of cultural mediation articulated by SWIS workers throughout all of their responses to the interview questions. In particular, cultural mediation was required by SWIS workers in all of the four areas outlined in this section. As this is such a prevalent concept in this research the next section is devoted to exploring the concept of cultural mediation.

3.5. Cultural Bridging/Cultural Mediation

SWIS workers are deliberately placed in the role of cultural mediators in that they bridge two distinct cultures: their first culture and the host culture. This role is based on the assumption that they have the ability to bridge their way through two cultures and

hopefully assist in the navigation process for newcomers. Mediating between cultures requires knowledge and skills in identifying and translating cultural symbols, signs or tools (Vygotsky as cited in Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyes, & Miller, 2003). Vygotsky's theory makes an important distinction between experiences where an individual has immediate contact with the environment and those experiences that require the interaction by a symbolic tool. This concept is part of a sociological understanding that culture is a learned behavior. According to Vygotsky (1962), mediation can occur as a material tool—system of symbols for example how a thumbs up has a specific meaning in one culture—or in the behavior of another human being like the raising of hand in class in school. A system of symbols are culturally embedded in such a way that, for example, the symbol '!' may be understood to mean danger depending on the context—a context that could require cultural interpretation. Vygotskian theory suggests that a person determines his/her individual relation with their environment with the aid of an artificial stimulus system (Kozulin et al., 2003). Stimuli such as the casting of lots, tying a knot to recall have evolved to have cultural significance and aid in the understanding and mastery of one's own reaction to experiences. According to Vygotsky (1962) the source of mediation is either in a material tool, a system of symbols, or in the behavior of another human being. Kozulin et al.(1990) note that Vygotsky paid particular attention to semiotic mediators, from simple signs to complex semiotic systems such as works of literature, which act as psychological tools in transforming natural impulses into higher mental processes (pp.114–115). In the context that SWIS workers operate within they are able to recognize inconsistent understandings of these psychological tools as experienced by their clients. They can now, through their own first-hand experience, inform their clients as to the meaning communicated—either verbal or non-verbal—rooted in a cultural tool.

What is relevant to this study is that material tools and symbols are not necessarily new for newcomers and may be familiar in their culture but now have a different meaning thus newcomers must learn or re-learn the meaning behind certain tools. Societal norms determine the standards expected of us and these must be learned or re-learned for the immigrant student. These psychological tools may indeed act as barriers for newcomers. The process from settlement to integration requires learning, or at least understanding, cultural references, behaviors, and symbols that are embedded in the day-to-day language, gestures, norms, procedures, and cultural

specifics. These are not easily learned but require a type of deeper psychological understanding of a host culture. An integral role for SWIS workers is acting as liaisons between school and newcomer family. This context is fraught with cultural symbols that may require a new or adapted set of psychological tools. Learning or understanding these dimensions poses an enormous barrier for refugee students who are, in many cases, balancing cultural understanding while dealing with tremendous stresses in their home and personal lives. As cultural mediators SWIS workers may offer the support and knowledge required to assist refugees through these challenges times.

In his article *Mediated Learning Experience and Cultural Diversity* Kozulin (2001) claims, “the problem of immigrant and ethnic minority students’ cognitive and problem-solving skills has both practical and theoretical importance” (p. 1). The theoretical problem is the recognition of cross-cultural differences in cognition and the practical problem is how school systems reach its educative objectives while mediating an understanding of cultural differences. Kozulin responds to this by blending two views of culture and cognition in a practical matrix. In recognizing differences in cross-cultural cognition, Kozulin outlines Vygotsky’s 1962 view in comparison to Michael Cole’s 1990 opposing view of cross-cultural cognition. Vygotsky’s view emphasizes the importance of culture as a source of developing cognitive tools. As noted by Kozulin, “According to Vygotsky and his followers cognitive processes are formed in the course of socio-cultural activities” (p. 2). Vygotskian theory claims that it is through human social interactions and dialogue that individuals learn cognitive processes that enable understanding and participation in the culture to which one belongs. For Kozulin (2001):

Psychological tools include signs, symbolic and literary systems, graphic-symbolic devices, formulae, and so on. Inter-cultural cognitive differences are attributed to different systems of psychological tools and methods of their acquisition practiced in different cultures. (p. 2)

The role of a student in the classroom provides an example of how psychological tools are deeply ingrained in specific environments such as the classroom setting. The Western standard for behaviour in a classroom may be incongruent with other cultural concepts, and at the greatest extreme, as is often the case with refugee students, there may be no prior experience to apply to a new classroom environment in a new culture. Vygotskyian (1962) theory suggests it is necessary to introduce new psychological tools in order to achieve the cognitive tools necessary to make meaning of the task at hand.

For example, the classroom task of brainstorming requires a specific set of psychological tools that may or may not be available to new immigrant students; therefore, the tools (how to) must be developed alongside the content. For students demonstrating a lack of understanding of a process such as brainstorming and now being expected to participate in the activity they are tasked with struggling in three concurrent areas: the content; the language; and the new process used to facilitate learning. This concept is noted by Kozulin (2001) as being key for newcomer students: "Minority students whose native culture does not have a required set of psychological tools should be introduced to them in order to acquire the necessary cognitive skills" (p. 2). Vygotsky (1962) views tools as culturally specific; whereas, Michael Cole (1990) views context as culturally specific not the tools.

Michael Cole (1990) examined Vygotsky's (1962) approach concluding that there is a contextual theory of cognitive functions. A number of studies revealed to Cole that, "different cultural and educational groups use the same basic cognitive processes" (as cited in Kozulin, 2001, p. 2). He further argues that the differences lie in the cultural context of learning. He notes the cognitive tool of classification by stating that different cultural groups utilize the same tool, yet their ability to classify is contextually specific. An unschooled child may be able to classify objects in his/her immediate world, but would have difficulty utilizing this tool in an unfamiliar learning situation. For example, a newly-arrived immigrant from a rural pre-literate society is asked to classify numbers in terms of prime numbers or even and odd numbers. Aside from the language barrier, this student will not have the cultural context set to apply classification to numbers, yet may have the tools necessary for classification. This instance requires transferring latent skills to a new context rather than teaching the cognitive tool from the beginning. Cole (1990) concludes that school-based skills will grow with the outside-the-school contexts becoming more similar to those of the school itself. As students develop new skills within the school setting they will thus be able to apply these skills in other areas of their life further solidifying their knowledge and application of the school-based skills. For example, for some newcomers the concept of mix-gendered discussion groups may be foreign and at the extreme not supported in the country of origin thus placing some students in an uncomfortable situation resulting in a negative impact on their achievement in group-based activities within the classroom. Outside of the school community the newly-arrived student may experience many other examples of cross-

gender communication occurring on buses, in shopping queues, on television, to name just some of many. Over time this may become more familiar therefore making classroom participation in mix-gendered groupings a new cultural norm.

Cultural awareness goes far deeper than simply knowing something about basic aspects or celebrations of a culture for example recognizing Lunar New Year. While this sort of recognition of other cultural celebrations may add to the richness of a school community, it is not, however, enough background information to foster an understanding of another culture. Understanding the differences between cognitive tools may help to understand differences in, for example, student achievement, reluctance to participate, and overall confidence in the school environment:

Many of the difficulties facing culturally different students stem from the incongruence between their previous learning experience and the demands of the formal educational system. (Kozulin, 2001, p. 6)

Indeed this incongruence is a challenge as immigrant students have multiple struggles to overcome. They must learn the new language, new societal expectations, new educational experience, and as is the case in this study, all of this is occurring within a large urban school community population. In terms of integration, cultural norms and expectations may in fact be the most difficult aspect to understand and learning how to apply oneself appropriately in the new culture is fraught with many barriers. In particular those students with little or no prior educational experience will find the demands overwhelming. This is a very specific and significant aspect of cultural awareness that will be a key area for SWIS workers to assist in making meaning and connections with those they serve.

In his book *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Charles Taylor (1994) combines recognition of individual identity with the social-cultural identity one has as he weaves together themes central to his philosophy such as the development of an inter-subjective conception of identity based on dialogical modes of “webs of interlocution”. Taylor recognizes that the identity of one’s self is inescapably connected to dialogical relations. Taylor strongly roots identity in dialogical relations and claims that, “We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression” (p. 32). For Taylor languages extend beyond words we speak and include

the languages of art, gesture, of love, and others. Language is acquired through interaction with others, in particular interactions with those that matter. For Taylor and others, the formation of the human mind is not monological and developed on one's own, but rather the human mind is dialogical (Taylor, 1994). Further, identity is defined in dialogue with, and sometimes in struggle against, the things that the significant others in our lives want to see in us. In time significant others may no longer be part of an individual's life, yet the early and formative conversations remain a part of one's identity. For Taylor identity is deeply connected to others, "It is who we are, 'where we're coming from'. As such it is the background against which our tastes and desires and opinions and aspirations make sense" (pp. 33-34). Taylor further explores the notion that discourse of recognition exists on two levels: the intimate sphere and the public sphere. In this instance the intimate sphere is the part of one's identity that is shaped by dialogical relationships with significant others; whereas, the public sphere influences identity in a more global manner by positioning the individual in the politics of recognition. The politics of recognition, for Taylor, indicates a continuing politics of equal recognition within society. Taylor claims, "Equal recognition is not just the appropriate mode for a healthy democratic society" (p. 36). For those who feel denied feelings of recognition oppression or inferiority may exist as noted by Taylor, "Not only contemporary feminism but also race relations and discussions of multiculturalism are undergirded by the premise that withholding recognition can be a form of oppression" (p. 36). This is a critical concept for this study. In terms of identity formation newcomers, and in particular refugees, are tasked with positioning their already-formed identity within a new identity based on the host society. With the assumption that the majority of newcomers are not fluent in the host country's language this becomes a difficult feat.

Taylor's concept of dialogical relationships and identity is rooted in similar claims made by John Dewey (1944) in his book *Democracy and Education* as he presents his views on the individual and the world. Dewey claims:

As a matter of fact every individual has grown up, and always must grow up, in a social medium. His responses grow intelligent, or gain meaning, simply because he lives and acts in a medium of accepted meanings and values. (p. 295)

Dewey claims that the development and concept of mind is not an isolated process but rather, "The self *achieves* mind in the degree in which knowledge of things is incarnate

in the life about him; the self is not a separate mind building up knowledge anew on its own account” (p. 295). Dewey’s theories in this case are not directed specifically at identity formation, as are Taylor’s, but nonetheless there are important principles that support Taylor. For example, Dewey highlights the need for learning to be an individual process based on one’s personalized thinking. In fact, he finds a redundancy with the general comment of think for one’s self, “The phrase “think for one’s self” is a pleonasm. Unless one does it for one’s self it isn’t thinking” (p. 303). Dewey, in this narrative, is focussed on the individual and the world as he explores the importance of individualized mental operations. Dewey’s ultimate claim in this section of his book is the necessity of individual thinking, in particular for the learner, to propel new ideas, discoveries, and advances in general. He suggests, “True individualism is a product of the relaxation of the grip of authority of custom and traditions as standards of belief” (p. 305). This level of individualism is arguably beyond the realm of possibility for a refugee learner in school and a refugee adult in mainstream population. Yet it is important to understand this complexity in order to scaffold refugee students toward this end.

Seyla Benhabib (2002), in *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*, supports Taylor’s (1989) thesis that social practices impact the formation or malformation of identity, “I certainly subscribe to this thesis of the inter-subjective constitution of the self through dialogic moral practices” (p. 51). It is this interconnection between self and society that is crucial to identity. Benhabib (2002) does not entirely support Taylor’s (1989) full views on the politics of recognition, yet for the purpose of this discussion her strong endorsement of Taylor’s concept of webs of interlocution is relevant. Taylor’s (1989) theory of webs of interlocution is articulated in his book, *Sources of Self*, where he indicates:

I am a self only in relation to certain interlocutors: in one way in relation to those conversation partners who were essential to my achieving self-definition; in another in relation to those who are now crucial to my continuing grasp of languages of self-understanding—and, of course, these classes may overlap. A self exists only within what I call ‘webs of interlocution.’ (p. 36)

The focus on the linguistic and social nature of this theory appeals to Benhabib (2002). In support of Taylor (1989) she indicates, “Suppose one agrees with Taylor, as I do, that human identities can be formed only through webs of interlocution, that we become who

we are not solely but in a crucial sense through our immersion in various communities of language and socialization” (p. 56). Where Benhabib deviates from Taylor’s (1989) claims of the politics of difference is in her questions of the link between one’s individual identity and the collective differences, Benhabib challenges Taylor by exemplifying how group or collective rights may conflict with individual rights and self-interest.

This process of formulating identity, and for newcomers an altered identity, is complex and multi-barriered for the newcomer and refugee student. Refugee students in particular will have many struggles along the way to achieve a sense of belonging and a strong sense of identity. As noted, many refugee students are arriving in the host nation traumatized, stigmatized, with poor health, living in poverty, and not equipped with core understandings and applicable past experiences to draw upon when bridging between two identities. As a country so strongly rooted in the concept of multiculturalism concepts of identity and belonging are key.

Benhabib (2002) opposes what is called strong multiculturalism or what has been called mosaic multiculturalism. She suggests, “we should view human cultures as constant creations, re-creations, and negations of imaginary boundaries between “we” and the “other(s)” (p. 8). Benhabib argues against the concept of “culture as a whole”; in fact she views it as an analytical error. Her argument speaks to the generative nature of culture as indicated by her examples of what constitutes culture, “What was American culture in the sixties? What was the culture of the Renaissance?” (p. 58). For Benhabib it is not reasonable to consider culture as *pars pro toto* as it is not easy to define a culture holistically; there are far too many cultural practices and beliefs each with various interpretations and meanings. Barry (2001), a proponent of liberalism rather than multiculturalism, posits that “cultures have propositional content” (p. 270). His concept suggests that various cultures distinguish between true and false, right and wrong, ugly and beautiful (Barry, 2001) and thus cannot have simultaneous meanings. Jacob Levy (2000) agrees with this concept:

Non-cruelty, non-humiliation, and general tolerance are possible if not always easy. Public affirmation of respect and recognition, though, cannot be available to all cultures simultaneously...To recognize what a group values in its own culture is to accept a standard by which some other groups fail to be worthy of respect. (p. 32)

This concept expands to a larger discussion around the philosophical views and differences between multiculturalism and liberalism. At the heart of this discussion is the notion of cultural differences and how we support these differences within one dominant culture.

Rather than viewing school culture as many identifiable cultures with boundaries, which may include the common definition of multiculturalism, we might want to view our schools as new cultures that emerge out of re-defined concepts of self. In fact, Benhabib (2002) argues that this is multiculturalism and that schools have a role:

I argue that the task of democratic equality is to create impartial institutions in the public sphere and civil society where this struggle for the recognition of cultural differences and the contestation for cultural narratives can take place without domination. (p. 8)

In this sense multiculturalism, or pluralistic society as mentioned in British Columbia's Ministry of Education's mission statement, is not simply mixing cultures together and creating a heterogeneous population, but equally about the generative aspect of culture. Within a given population, for example a school, an individual may be struggling with identity of self in multiple cultures. Prior to entering a new culture self-confidence was gained through understanding of the known world around him/her and his/her symbiotic relationship within that culture. Part of that culture remains at home through language, customs, food, familial roles, concepts of child development, and concepts of school—to name a few. Our schools, for example, are not simply a mixing together of many cultures, but beneath the surface individual members of the community have to attend to an *individual multiculturalism* in which the individual is blending and understanding the multiple identities within each person. In terms of identity formulation and sense of belonging there is a multi-layered process to attend to. A refugee student in a school, in this case a new school environment, will not only have to navigate between the home language and culture and that of the school, but will also have to gain insight and understanding into the new culture through language attainment and shared communication with peers to eventually arrive at a strong sense of identity and sense of belonging. This is a very complex and challenging journey, one in which the role of SWIS workers can positively impact. What is particularly beneficial in this process is that by and large SWIS workers share a similar language and culture of origin as the

struggling student and by extension their families. In this instance, SWIS workers serve in the role of cultural mediator and cultural insider.

3.6. SWIS Workers as Cultural Mediators and Cultural Insiders

Serving as a cultural mediator adds another level of complexity within the role of SWIS workers as they experience this in their day-to-day experience. In addition to being a cultural mediator, they also, by and large, share the same cultural background as their clients making them a cultural insider, which for the most part is a positive attribute, yet at times has its own set of challenges. As previously noted concepts of culture and identity are extremely complex. Assuming an insider role requires humility as the insider is positioned with a different role and responsibilities within the given community (Smith, 1999). In the case of SWIS workers their role within their ethnic community is twofold: one of supporter employed within an external organization—a school district—as well as a member of the ethnic community outside of their professional role. At times this can be a delicate relationship between SWIS workers and their clients. Recent research indicates the complexities that arise around insider perspective tend to be issues in terms of race, gender, class, and culture (Merriam et al., 2001). In the case of SWIS workers a further category may be added to the issues that may complicate the insider role. In this case the level of integration into the host country as demonstrated by SWIS workers may be viewed in terms of position or power within the cultural community. Recent research on insider/outsider positioning recognizes the various iterations of and complexity within what was once considered an either/or situation. These iterations may be viewed through a typology introduced by Banks (Merriam et al., 2001) that identifies the different roles researchers may take, or in this instance, SWIS workers as fieldworkers rather than researcher. In this typology the indigenous/insider is one who can speak with authority to the values, history, and in-depth understanding of the culture, whereas, an indigenous/outsider would be placed in the typology that suggests a connection to the community, but would have experienced a high level of integration into the host community. The final two sub-sets include the external insider whereby there is a rejection of the indigenous community and adoption of the host community and the external outsider that presents a position of being

socialized in a community outside of the specific one researched. Within this typology SWIS workers will likely belong to the first two sets. This typology suggests that integration levels into the host community may impact the positioning and relationship between SWIS workers and their clients. In this case the levels of integration most likely are a result of length of time in Canada and may indeed be considered an asset as newcomer families likely feel confident about the Canadian advice they are given.

The debate around insider versus outsider perspective is not a new one; however, more extensive consideration and research around the insider view has been formulated in recent years. Scholars have questioned what actually constitutes insider research and the validity of the data obtained by insiders and to what degree the insiders are, in fact, insiders. Critics of the insider role suggest that membership of a researcher in a given community—indigenous, black, women, gays, youth, etc.—may lead toward bias or a clouded lens that may affect the outcomes of the research. In their defence, insider researchers argue that this position gives them an in-depth understanding of the community not available to the outsider. Further, insiders are able to pose questions that challenge cultural practices and norms that may not have been queried by an outsider, thus leading to the advancement of scholarly knowledge Merriam et al. (2001) states the opposite in that the outsider has the ability to ask ‘taboo’ questions:

The insider’s strengths become the outsider’s weaknesses and vice-versa. The outsider’s advantage lies in curiosity with the unfamiliar, the ability to ask taboo questions, and being seen as non-aligned with subgroups thus often getting more information. (p. 411)

Although seemingly in contrast regarding who has access to hard-to-ask questions, I would suggest both insider and outsider have advantages.

Robert Merton addressed the insider role over 50 years ago referring to it as “Insider Doctrine” (Merton, 1957). For Merton (1972) the concept that only members of a particular group are best equipped to research their group was ‘solipsistic’. The notion that you ‘have to be one to understand one’ presents the possibility of fragmentation within the group:

Thus, if only whites can understand whites, and blacks, blacks, and only men can understand men, and women, women, this gives rise to the paradox which severely limits both premises: for it turns out, by

assumption, that some insiders are excluded from understanding other insiders with white women being condemned not to understand white men, and black men, not to understand black women, and so through the various combinations of status subsets. (p. 22)

Reportedly the initial assumption that one is an insider may be dismantled and negotiated as part of the trust and rapport building of the researcher. Various internal factors within the group may impact the relationship. Merriam et al. (2001) outlined how her role as a black researcher within a black community was impacted by the “lightness” of her complexion—within this particular community social status was often a result of lightness or darkness of complexion and straighter versus kinked hair, “Colorism is a vestige from slavery much like class is a function of a hierarchical capitalistic society, and sexism, evidentiary of a patriarchal system” (p. 666). In her research as an ‘insider’ member of the Maori community Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) observed social nuances that prompted her to deliberately consider whether she was indeed an insider. Understanding the culture (Maori), Tuhiwai Smith was able to pick up on certain cultural behaviour that may have placed her, as a researcher, in the role of outsider. She observed domestic Maori behaviour such as food offerings, tidying the house, organizing children, which indicated to her that she was being perceived as an outsider and guest despite her complete familiarity with the women whom she interviewed. As an educated researcher she was placed in a different role. Other indigenous researchers have attested to the value of the insider role. Karen Swisher (1996), a strong advocate for American Indians, asks the question:

How can an outsider really understand life on reservations, struggle for recognition, sovereignty, economic development, preservation of language and culture? Perhaps they can gain a high degree of empathy and act as “brokers” of sorts, but it takes the depth of meaning incorporated in Indian education to ask appropriate questions and find appropriate answers. (p. 194)

Swisher claims that in researching and understanding American Indian culture an increase in American Indian researchers would be beneficial. Non-American-Indian researchers, according to Swisher, have indeed contributed to the field; however, she attests that a more robust and authentic body of research would be gained by an increased inside perspective of American-Indian researchers. She articulates, “This is not so much a criticism of their efforts as it is an admonition for Indian authors to publish

more” (“Self-determination, potential, and confidence,” para. 1). Swisher values the relevance of the qualitative methodologies used in past research. Much of what has been written is not necessarily inaccurate or offensive, yet a key piece that is missing, for Swisher, is the passion and experience of the insider perspective that asks questions that an outsider wouldn’t understand to ask. The voices that reflect the inter-generational learning, self-determination, principles of sovereignty, history, language, and culture are not gained from the outside perspective. This notion is not a novel consideration as Robert Merton (1957) indicated the same phenomenon in the 1970s:

With regard to programs of Black Studies, for example, it is proposed that some white professors of the relevant subjects might be brought in since there are not enough Black scholars to staff all the proliferating programs of study. (p. 3)

Although this research did not specifically ask SWIS workers questions regarding what they may or may not consider appropriate questions to ask their clients, it is likely that their insider role would enable them to ask, or equally important, not ask certain questions when dealing with clients. In particular, questions around religion, cultural sensitivity, contrasting Canadian values and processes, and in general questions regarding their early settlement stage. Indeed SWIS workers will be able to anticipate what is particularly new and strange for the clients they serve and provide insight to help them understand and adjust.

Robert Merton (1957) describes group membership as dynamic and that the boundaries of groups are in a constant process of change as registered by social interactions. For Merton, group membership includes interaction whereby interacting persons define themselves as part of the group, and others also define them as part of the group. In early research around the concept of insider perspective, Merton introduced the idea of an interplay of sub-groups when discussing group dynamics. In this instance sub-groups would be defined as, “structurally constituted by those who develop distinctive social relations among themselves which are not shared with other members of the larger group” (p. 287). This interplay of “sub-groups” (Merton, 1957) may have an impact on SWIS workers as they work toward gaining trust within their cultural community. The role of a SWIS worker demands a personal relationship with those they serve. They assist in areas that require counselling, supporting, directing to outreach services, and liaising with school communities all of which require a level of

trust between client and SWIS worker in order to be successful. One of the survey questions addressed this phenomenon specifically by asking, “Has your shared cultural background assisted you, or at times hindered you?” This question was intended specifically to assist in understanding the insider role of SWIS workers. This will be explored further in the Findings section; however, for the most part this shared cultural background assisted more than hindered their work.

3.7. Conclusion

In building an understanding of the role of SWIS workers it is critical to discuss the concepts highlighted in this chapter. This role is not one simply of assisting newcomers in day-to-day activities or seeking resources for newcomers to access. It is a complex role that assumes the position of a front-line worker dealing with some of the most vulnerable citizens arriving in a new country. Working within their familiar ethnic groups SWIS workers are expected to assist in the settlement phase and eventual integration process in schools and communities; however, when working specifically with refugee families this task is far more challenging as the starting point for these families is often compounded with deficits and non-transferable skills from their country of origin. There are many barriers facing refugee families as they strive to settle and eventually integrate into their host society. As noted in this chapter, the barriers go far deeper than language, and SWIS workers are an integral part of assisting refugee families into the school system and community at large. There are many challenges to contend with as newcomers, in particular refugees, attempt to navigate their new environment to a place where they are settled and ultimately integrated into the host society. There are many immediate challenges to get refugees to even a beginning point where they are prepared and can consider settlement.

This process takes a long time and requires much cultural mediation and support. As an immigrant-receiving country it is important that Canadians continue to find ways to improve our role as host, which we now understand as an impactful responsibility shared by all. Moving through the continuum newcomers require understanding, support, and encouragement, as the settlement and integration process is not one that is easily navigated on one’s own but rather requires direction at every stage. As a country that boasts multicultural programs and a positive national attitude

toward multiculturalism, it is not surprising that a program such as SWIS has been implemented. The narratives of the SWIS workers in this research certainly indicated that this program is assisting newcomers to move along the continuum and there was strong recognition that, for those who are at the farthest end of the continuum, their role as cultural mediator is valuable.

The large constructs in this chapter—settlement, integration, cultural mediation, and cultural insider—are not only important for the reader to gain an understanding, it is critical that the researcher demonstrates knowledge in these areas to ensure confidence that the etic perspective is well founded. It is necessary to ground the role of SWIS workers in these core understandings to fully appreciate the need for and reason why government budgets and resources would target a program specifically addressing the early needs of immigrants. The SWIS program is in direct response to the perceived issues around settlement and integration of newcomer families into our schools and communities at large. This can be viewed as a holistic approach that endeavours to connect families with outreach services, provide support between home/school, connect with families and assist in the integration process, to name a few of the job-related areas (school district welcome centre). This approach is seen as having great value as a holistic approach to settlement that pays attention to school ethos, welcoming environments, good induction procedures, home liaison, community links, and language support (Rutter & Jones, 2006). This welcoming environment is crucial to a sense of security and belonging enabling students and families to form relationships that reduce vulnerability and build resilience (West as cited in Rutter & Jones, 1998). Whole school approaches highlight preparedness to address pre and post issues around displacement and offer direction and hope for the future.

Chapter 4.

Research Methodology

4.1. Building the Case in a Large Urban School District

The role of schools has expanded to function in many regards as a social service organization in addition to an educational institution. The conceptualization and implementation of the SWIS program attests to this shift. In an effort to better understand the complexity of the SWIS worker experience the intent of this research was to hear first-hand accounts of the successes and challenges of the program as reported by SWIS workers as they strive to meet both Ministry and school district mandates. As discussed earlier, this school district, along with others, has been instructed to deliver primarily quantitative data in their reporting processes to the Ministry as a way of evaluating or measuring the program's services and impact. For example in a program guideline published by the Immigration Integration Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development is concerned with tracking and reporting of SWIS program data such as: number of students and family members receiving settlement counselling, number of workshops provided, number of information sharing sessions with schools, and the number of school/community events attended by students and their families (School District No. 53, 2013). Additionally, in a report prepared by Ference Weicker & Company (2008) for the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development a largely quantitative approach was used to evaluate the SWIS initiative. Even when qualitative data was collected, it was presented quantitatively, losing the richness that can be an integral part of qualitative research. In the Ference Weicker report over 35 SWIS workers were interviewed; however, the results of the interview responses were presented and quantified as percentages or scaled responses to questions. Primarily quantitative data is also reported to the Ministry on a monthly basis by school districts. The Ministry collects information regarding how many clients are served and how many services the clients are

connected with (e.g., numbers of families entering the school district, numbers of families exiting the program, number of services accessed, numbers of workshops facilitated, and length of time families access the SWIS program). Given the large amount of quantitative data collected thus far, I chose to use a case study approach collecting SWIS worker perspectives on refugee immigrant experiences through structured interviews designed.

4.1.1. Research Questions

While quantitative information is crucial to understanding the reach and breadth of the program model, this study is designed to complement current knowledge by providing a more descriptive practitioner perspective. To examine the practitioner perspective, the research questions that this study asked were:

- What were the perceived experiences of Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), who were working with refugee families in a large British Columbian urban school district between 2008-2011, as they strove to meet the intended outcomes of the Settlement program?
- How did SWIS workers perceive this program assisted refugee families in the settlement process into the school community and community at large?
- What success and challenges did SWIS workers report within this role?
- To what extent has the experience of SWIS workers aligned with the intended outcomes of the program?

4.1.2. Setting

The large urban school district studied in this research was one of the original 10 school districts in British Columbia to implement the BC SWIS program in 2007. As such, this school district provided an opportunity to represent a district that has a rich history in settlement work in the province and a unique delivery model of the SWIS program that implements a centralized service through its Welcome Centre where all newcomers with children must connect to the school district upon arrival in their new community. This district also has a diverse student population and by extension a strong ethnic representation within this urban area. This urban area is one of the fastest growing communities through immigration. The ethnic composition is diverse in British Columbia and will continue to be so in the future. Immigration is currently the main reason for population growth in the province. International migration accounted for 66% of the population growth between 2006 – 2011 (Figure 4.2). The newcomer population

has a definite impact on the population; therefore, how we settle and integrate this large percentage of the population into the host community and schools certainly attests to the relevance of the SWIS program. This school district has a demonstrable increase in the total of languages other than English spoken at home as well as a steady increase in languages spoken in this district and community. During the time of this research this school district experienced an overall increase in student enrolment, of which immigration was a major contributing factor. This table will not be included as it would potentially identify this particular school district. The following table summarizes the data as of September, 2011 which is useful in contextualizing the current demographic at the time of the SWIS interviews in October, 2011 (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Language Report: Languages Spoken in the Home

	Total Languages Spoken	Total English in the Home	Total non-English Languages	Non-English Languages (%)
2011	163	34,456	34,562	49.36
2010	156	35,140	34,025	49.18
2009	126	37,732	30,615	44.79
2008	114	37,102	29,090	43.95
2007	112	38,140	27,500	41.90
2006	101	37,815	27,248	41.88
2005	93	38,690	25,797	40.00
2004	94	39,063	24,457	38.50
2003	87	39,077	23,576	37.63
2002	91	38,892	23,105	37.27
2001	92	39,332	21,922	35.79
2000	87	39,456	20,263	33.93

Note. Data as of September 2011; reproduced with permission by school district studied.

This table supports the current growth and shift in community diversity as represented. With an increasing rise in the total languages other than English spoken at home, the need for the SWIS program is relevant and timely. Although changes in language demographics may not be significant from year-to-year, according to the statistics above the changes from 2000-2011 have been significant. This school district provides an exemplar model of the SWIS program in a large and diverse district.

Concurrently in British Columbia there is a high percentage of international migration to the province in general, and it is common practice for the majority of newcomers to settle in large urban areas, as is the case in this research. This school district provided an opportunity to examine an established SWIS program within a very diverse population both in the schools and community at large. This research was not intended in any way to be conducted as a comparative research design thus a single school district in a large urban area was chosen. Additionally, this district has a large number of well-established SWIS workers to survey and ultimately interview, thus ensuring healthy participation and a diverse sampling of SWIS workers. As Carol Weiss (1998) claims, "Rather than breaking them down into separate items for analysis, the case study seeks to keep all elements of the situation in sight at once. The watchword is *holistic*" (p. 261). In this instance a case study was employed as a holistic method not to examine what happened within the case, but rather to examine a single case for the purpose of evaluation. The 13 SWIS participants did not represent 13 individual cases, but are viewed collectively as part of the SWIS program in general. In this study the SWIS program in this specific school district represents the case. This single case is bound by:

1. Specific timeframe 2008 – 2011,
2. Single school district was investigated,
3. Refugee settlement is at the core of this study,
4. Adherence to Ministry program outcomes, historical settlement practices, and research in key areas as highlighted in the literature review.

As well, the SWIS workers' experience working with refugees was by and large spent assisting refugees whose basic needs are great and require much support, thus further binding this case to a specific point on the continuum of integration. The following section outlines the research method used to evaluate this role through the use of case study.

4.2. Case Study

According to Robert Stake (2005), "Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied" (p. 443). The case is defined by the case, not the

methods of inquiry used (Stake, 2005). Stake (2005) further articulates, “Coming to understand a case usually requires extensive examining of how things get done, but the referent in case study is the case, not the methods by which the case operates” (p. 444). A case study may be viewed as a way of organizing data to keep the focus on the total lending itself to an overall holistic approach (Weiss, 1998). For Carol Weiss qualitative methods of research have gained much recognition in recent years in particular in terms of evaluation as a research method. In reference to case study Weiss posits, “The defining feature is the exploration of complex real-life interactions as a composite whole” (p. 261). Case study is viewed less a design than a means to understand or evaluate interrelationships between people, institutions, events, and beliefs (Weiss, 1998). These interrelations are critical to this research project as the interview process is used to enable participants to articulate their relationship with the program, in particular when working with refugees. The interview combined questions that drew out both narratives and some aspects of quantitative data to measure perceptions of outcomes of the SWIS program. These interrelationships told as stories and shared perceptions are key to examining this program as a whole and offering a complementary qualitative insight into the program. Preskil and Tzavaras Catsambas (2006) discuss the importance of stories and their place in the research process saying, “throughout the ages, stories have been ‘vehicles for making sense of our experiences, but they also help the practitioners to determine a course of action to influence others’ (Abma, 2003, p. 223)” (p. 13). Preskil and Tzavaras Catsambas further state that, “Conducting open-ended face-to-face and telephone interviews are effective methods of collecting qualitative data that result in stories, opinions, attitudes and examples of people’s experiences” (p. 81). Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) provide a basic description of what a case study can do by stating, “A good case study brings a phenomenon to life for the readers and helps them understand its meaning” (p. 446). The interviews in this study were conducted face-to-face and combined questions that enabled SWIS workers to share their experience working with refugee families while simultaneously providing quantitative data to embed their narratives.

Robert Stake (2006) rationalized that qualitative case study research is an appropriate method for eliciting an in-depth understanding of the complex interactions of people in the context of a specific situation—in this instance SWIS workers in the field in a specific school district. Further, Robert Yin (1989) posits that case-study designs have

relevance when addressing questions of *how* and *why*, and most particularly, offer a useful research design for focusing on the real-life context in which the researcher has little or no control over events—the detailed experiences of SWIS workers is what was key to learn in this case. Yin’s claim is most appropriate to this study in terms of the *how* aspect of his logic. For example, this study investigated how the intended Ministry outcomes of the SWIS program were congruent with the SWIS workers’ experience in the field. In his chapter on qualitative case studies, Stake provides this explanation of case study by noting that “The epistemological question is the driving question of this chapter: What can be learned about the single case?” (Stake, 2008, p. 120). By limiting the research to a single case, SWIS program in a specific large urban school district working with refugees, a narrowed approach results in answering this question and the findings of this single case are reported as what has been learned rather than a comparison between cases for example of two or more school districts. This approach ultimately serves as an evaluative tool to help and enrich our view of the program. It is indeed this central question about what we can learn from the success and challenges of the SWIS workers as they strove to meet the intended Ministry outcomes that has resulted in learning important program information as voiced through SWIS workers.

In case study research delineations between context and phenomena, or in this instance program, are not readily distinguishable (Yin, 1989). According to Robert Yin, case studies typically involve investigation where the boundaries between the phenomena (SWIS experiences) and context, the overall historical, cultural, and theoretical frameworks, are not clear (Yin, 1989) or immediately apparent, yet the understanding should be in place to ensure the case study is fully examined. Part of the context is the in-depth understanding of the epistemological knowledge required by the researcher. Case studies require an understanding of broader concepts beyond the details of the case, for example in this study what is relevant knowledge of the researcher is a solid understanding of immigration, settlement, integration, refugee settlement, reception, cultural mediation, and insider perspective in order to build a specific case and place it accurately and completely in its context. This knowledge base leads to the concept of the ‘etic’ and ‘emic’ perspectives (Creswell, 2007; Gall et al., 2007). It is required that the researcher has the etic perspective, theoretical frameworks brought in to the issues; whereas, the frontline emic perspective relies on the issues found in the field—voices of SWIS workers. Case study methodology frames the

research data in the larger constructs in order to present a rich understanding of the data. Gall et al. (2007) support the relevance of the etic and emic perspectives, “One characteristic of case studies is an effort to portray truthfully the *etic* perspective of the researcher as well as the *emic* perspective of the research participants” (p. 450). The blending of the two perspectives enables mutual understanding between contrasting positions (Godina & McCoy as cited in Gall et al., 2007). This dialogue will culminate in the final product: “The final product is a holistic *cultural portrait* of the group that incorporates the views of the participants (*emic*) as well as the views of the researcher (*etic*)” (Creswell, 2007, p. 72). This final product will be presented and analyzed based on this blending of etic and emic knowledge and experience.

Case study focuses on in-depth description rather than essence of a phenomenon or the shared experiences of a cultural group (Creswell, 2007). Creswell states that, “Thus, case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)” (p. 73). This case is a bounded system as indicated earlier. This description of the SWIS experience as emphasized by Creswell is particularly important when reporting case based themes, as is the case with the key themes that emerged in this study. According to Gall et al. (2007):

A good depiction will provide what is called a thick description of the phenomenon, that is, statements that re-create a situation and as much of its context as possible, accompanied by the meanings and intentions inherent in that situation. (p. 451)

In seeking to hear the first-hand experiences of SWIS workers a case study was chosen as the most appropriate method for obtaining the rich description of SWIS workers experience in the field.

Researching the SWIS program using a quantitative approach is undoubtedly important and provides important data on the demographic reach of the program, number of services accessed and other data of this kind. However, this research employed a case study design to provide a frontline account of the day-to-day experience of SWIS workers. From the outset of this project it was important to hear the rich descriptions of the work SWIS workers perform. The strength of a case study design is that by investigating a bounded system through in-depth data collection

involving multiple sources of information a case description and case-based themes may be reported (Creswell, 2007). Although individual SWIS workers were interviewed, it is important to note that general descriptions of their role were applied to the program as a whole. As noted by Creswell (2007) case study is not concerned so much with shared experiences and needing to understand the essence of a phenomenon, but rather providing an in-depth understanding of a particular case. I believe a case study approach has provided an opportunity to hear the descriptions of the SWIS workers and note the themes that emerged through their stories and apply this perspective to the overall SWIS program. It has given broader meaning and richer detail to the quantitative data currently collected by the Ministry and school district.

4.3. Rationale

Robert Stake (2006) uses the concept of quintain to express the overall case as a whole that is comprised of different situations. For Stake, the quintain can be an organization or a campaign for example where we study its different parts or instances. He suggests, “The quintain is something that we want to understand more thoroughly, and we choose to study it through its cases, by means of a multi-case study” (p. vi). Stake also indicates that:

In multicase study research, the single case is of interest because it belongs to a particular collection of cases. The individual cases share a common characteristic or condition. The cases in the collection are somehow categorically bound together. They may be members of a group or examples of phenomenon. This quintain is the arena or holding company or umbrella for the cases we will study. (pp. 5-6)

Stake poses three main criteria for selecting cases referring to the concept of quintain, which suggests the importance of the overall context of a case:

Is the case relevant to the quintain? Do the cases provide diversity across contexts? Do the cases provide good opportunities to learn about complexity and contexts? (p. 23)

Further, he states that an important reason for including multi-cases is to examine how the program operates across various environments—in this instance a variety of ethnicities provided interaction with the program in several different environments.

Furthermore, Gall et al. (2007) emphasize that the researcher selects a case based on the key issue about what one wants to say about the case. This research was concerned with the challenges and successes experienced by SWIS workers and how their experience reflected the Ministry outcomes for the program. Gall et al. make clear the importance of specifying the population in a qualitative sample to express the importance of building the case in case-study methodology. In this case highlighting the diversity of participants that fostered a multi-voiced perspective that ultimately built a strong case as evidenced by the successful participation of SWIS workers in this research. Evidence from multi-case studies is considered more compelling due to the wider range of perspectives represented (Yin, 1989), and, in this case, will offer more solid experiential information to the case as a whole. Gall et al. (2007) suggest, "If the researcher cannot study all these individuals, he will need to consider which ones have experiences or perceptions that give them special value as data sources" (p. 457). This was the case as this research required experience working with refugees as a requisite for SWIS workers in order to participate in the project. Stake (2006) suggests that nothing is more important when one designs a study than ensuring a representative selection of cases. That said, this study was able to provide a selection of participants with different perspectives and ethnicities. SWIS workers working with different ethnic communities provided a varied overview of how the program operates in different contexts. This study offered a comprehensive selection.

The concept of researcher as a 'gatekeeper' bears some significance in this study, as the researcher is required to build rapport with research participants. I have worked directly with some of the SWIS workers as they have brought their clients to my school for assessment and potential enrolment in adult education programs. Basically, many of the SWIS workers realize that I am in 'the same business' as they and they appear to respect my position. This was not a concern, I felt, as the interview questions were not intended to provide an opportunity for SWIS workers to gain my favour in any way, nor would there be any benefit in their involvement. Indeed, their participation would not in any way impact their position in this school district. The interview questions were, by design, intended to seek a better understanding of their work and how it is enacted in the field when working with the refugee population. Additionally, I had support from the Manager of the Welcome Centre (SWIS program) and the Director of Instruction, who, at the time, oversaw the entire program. This established rapport, I'm

certain, enabled a smoother acceptance of my research role and entrance into the field setting. Additionally, my experience as a principal of a culturally-diverse adult education school and knowledge of the challenges facing our immigrant population in this school district aided in rapport-building with SWIS workers involved in this research. Rapport building is seen as an important step leading to the interview process of participants (Gall et al., 2007). If trust and rapport are established then it is possible for the researcher to obtain information not easily obtained by other research methods. Gall et al. indicate, "Stronger rapport is necessary if the interviewer wishes the respondents to reveal deeply personal or sensitive information" (p. 256). This rapport indeed proved to be helpful. The interviews flowed naturally and enthusiastically. In fact, comments were made to attest to this such as, "you understand this" (Colleen, October, 2011) and "I don't have to tell you this" (Colleen, October, 2011). These types of comments, I believe, demonstrate a common understanding and ease of dialogue reflected in the interview responses. There was a high level of interest in the research project and a keen desire to contribute by those SWIS workers who volunteered. This level of trust and appreciation for my taking such a serious interest in their work was conducive to hearing and recording a very authentic perspective of SWIS workers. I might add that there was a high level of respect for the questions asked and responses were focussed on the questions; there was no indication of responses being self-promoting or reactionary. Caution has been noted that a strong rapport can lead to off-topic comments or irrelevant matters to the interview; this was not the case. I did not sense that the SWIS workers involved felt that they had anything to gain per se by supporting my research, but rather I experienced a genuine interest in sharing their experience and having their voices have an impact on the program going forward. The positive and professional approach demonstrated by each one was beneficial and did not, I believe, compromise the research to any extent. Overall the interview experience was very enlightening and reassuring to me as the principal investigator.

Case study methodology does not lend itself to a simple template for research design. Gall et al. emphasize that, "Consistent with qualitative research in general, the design of each case study is determined by the researcher conducting the study and is specific to the phenomena being studied" (p. 454). The design is fluid in that it may be guided by the researcher's interpretive skills and relies heavily on the background knowledge and fundamental understanding of the researcher in the field (Gall et al.,

2007). In this study the literature review, along with the guiding frameworks behind the interview questions, serves to demonstrate the background knowledge of the principal researcher. Robinson (1998) argues, “since integration is individualized, contested and contextual it requires qualitative methodologies which allow the voices of respondents to be heard in an unadulterated form” (p. 122). In-depth interviewing is essential in revealing subjective aspects of integration. The questions were informed by the central question of the planned dissertation: challenges and successes experienced by SWIS workers in this urban school district. One of the advantages of the interview is that typically a higher rate of response is ensured as opposed to survey collection; in this case 13 of the 26 agreed to the interview, while the other 13 either did not meet the criteria, or were not a SWIS worker, or did not agree to volunteer for an interview. One disadvantage noted by Gall et al. is the lack of anonymity of respondents. However, in the reporting stage of the data collection the researcher has assured confidentiality.

4.4. Research Methods

From the outset of this research I wanted to investigate this newly implemented program and saw this as a great opportunity to expand upon my background experience and knowledge of English Language Learners (ELL) as both a teacher and principal. I have heard first-hand from past and present students and their families the many struggles facing newcomers as they enter the continuum from settlement to integration. By choosing to base my dissertation on the SWIS program I wanted to investigate this initiative from the practitioners perspective in. I chose to narrow this research by focussing on the impact the SWIS program has when working with refugee students and families and thought it would be advantageous to see how the program operated with one of the most vulnerable immigrant groups as a way of finding out what successes and challenges need to be celebrated or improved upon. In addition, the Ministry provides clear objectives in the policy documents and I wanted to investigate the relationship between these objectives and work in the field. To answer these queries I chose a case study as an appropriate research design to collect and make sense of the experiences of SWIS workers in one large urban school district. The following sections outline the research process.

4.5. Participant Selection

To obtain the rich descriptions and stories a case study of 13 volunteer participants was undertaken. This sample was obtained through the use of a two-stage process. The first stage began with a meeting in which all SWIS workers were in attendance. This was the school start-up meeting and I was pleased to be included on the agenda. At the meeting I provided background information about myself followed by an explanation of my research interest and intent. At that time I ensured SWIS workers that their participation in my research was voluntary and confidential. During stage one of the process all 26 SWIS workers who were employed at that time were surveyed—100% response—to ascertain the following information: length of employment as SWIS workers with this school district; background experience and education, amount of experience working with refugee students and families; and willingness to participate in an in-person interview. This information was sought as a way to select SWIS workers who had experience as a SWIS worker as opposed to serving as a Multicultural Worker for example. Subsequently interviews were conducted over the span of 6 weeks, with each interview lasting between 45 minutes and just over 1 hour. All 13 SWIS workers were able to complete the entire interview and responded to the majority of the questions. Questions were answered in a manner in which the information was retrieved through forthright articulation of the SWIS workers' experience in the field. By and large the responses were focussed; however, there were complementary narratives to assist in understanding the response to the question. Interviews were transcribed and sent to participants for authentication and verification.

4.6. Data Collection

This study incorporated a structured interview format. Each SWIS worker was asked the same 23 questions in the same sequence. Responses varied, yet interviews were consistently around 1 hour in length. Responses were recorded with consent of each SWIS worker and later transcribed and verified. A face-to-face format was chosen as a way to allow “control” over the situation and enabled SWIS workers to provide as candid responses as possible. According to Stake (2008), “There is very little flexibility in the way in which questions are asked or answered in the structured interview setting” (p. 124). The structured interview calls for the interviewer to play a neutral role enabling

responses to be authentic and unprompted. Stake further indicates that, “It is hoped that in a structured interview, nothing is left to chance” (p. 125). That said, they do note three non-sampling errors that may occur: respondent behavior whereby the respondent may try to please the interviewer and/or embellish answers to be socially desirable, the administration or design of the interview, and the interviewing techniques of the interviewer. The third interview error may be of most concern and:

most structured interviews leave little room for the interviewer to improvise or exercise independent judgement, but even in the most structured interview situation not every contingency can be anticipated and not every interviewer behaves according to the script (Bradburn, 1983, Frey, 1989). (Stake, 2008, p. 125)

One limitation noted in this interview style is that the researcher’s presence may bias responses. In this research, I believe, the researcher’s presence provided a level of support and encouragement to hear to the SWIS workers authentic experiences in the field.

The interview questions in this study were divided into three sections: Program Outcomes and Expectations, Successes and Challenges Met along the Way, and Refugee Family Experiences. This structure of the interview served as a sequenced approach to gathering the information sought in response to the original research questions. By beginning with background and experience the researcher was better able to get a full understanding of each SWIS worker before delving deeper into questions directed at their experience as a SWIS worker. I wanted to ensure that both challenges and successes were highlighted as a strategy for ensuring that interview responses were comprehensive. As well, when responding to the intended Ministry outcomes it was critical to review each of the five outcomes individually to gain a complete understanding and response to the research question, “To what extent has the experience of SWIS workers aligned with the intended outcomes of the program?” Questions were then posed to elicit narratives of SWIS workers when working with refugee students and families. The interview questions were rooted in theoretical underpinnings with direct links to research, Ministry outcomes, and the history of refugee settlement as demonstrated in Table 4.2. The guiding frameworks helped to shape the interview process were questions of a more evaluative nature. And finally the questions used for this interview help to bind the case to a single research area of refugee studies,

in particular those who are functioning at the early stages of the settlement continuum in a specific school district. The following table outlines the questions and their connection to current research in a variety of areas, Ministry objectives, and history of refugee settlement.

Table 4.2. Guiding Framework for Interview Questions

Link to Research/ Literature Review	Link to Ministry-intended Outcomes	History of Refugee settlement
Program Outcomes and Expectations		
<p>1. What, in your opinion, are the intended Ministry outcomes of the SWIS program? How were you told of these goals and their importance? Does that carry on in your day-to-day experience?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was important to ascertain a starting point in terms of how SWIS workers view of the Ministry mandate and if/how they are perceived as important, implementation, and how much time spent in achieving these goals. 	
<p>3. How has your experience as a SWIS worker enabled you to reach these intended outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This question provided an early understanding of the perceived congruency between intended outcomes and SWIS workers experience. 	
<p>4. How do you best describe the settlement experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Settlement is not an easily defined term. Research offers various definitions and contexts for settlement. The concept of pre-settlement is under-researched. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link to Ministry outcomes: a) Helping children adjust to school culture and focus on learning while providing their parents with information and resources on settlement and immigrant issues b). Assess needs of immigrant families an barriers to successful integration c). Increase access to programs and services and work to improve the effectiveness of those programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Views of refugee settlement have changed. Canada has a long history of settlement.
<p>5. How is the settlement experience different for refugees?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refugee settlement is a separate category of research. Refugees have unique settlement needs as supported by research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are the Ministry-intended outcomes enacted differently when working with refugees? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ History of refugee settlement. Canada has an historical approach to refugee settlement.
Successes and Challenges Met Along the Way		
<p>6. How do you measure success in your role?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is the SWIS worker role viewed in terms of Ministry outcomes? 	

Link to Research/ Literature Review	Link to Ministry-intended Outcomes	History of Refugee settlement
<p>7. What successes have you experienced when working with schools?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link to research on home/school partnership ▪ Link to cultural mediation and cultural insider ▪ Link to research on identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link to Ministry outcomes: a). Helping children adjust to school culture and focus on learning while providing their parents with information and resources on settlement and immigrant issues b). Increasing parents' understanding of Canadian culture and school systems c). Increase parent involvement in the school and community ▪ What successes and challenges have been experienced directly related to these Ministry outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link to history of refugee integration
<p>8. How do the schools communicate success to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link to research on home/school relationship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Several Ministry outcomes are related to home/school relationship; a). Helping children adjust to school culture and focus on learning while providing their parents with information and resources on settlement and immigrant issues b). Increasing parents' understanding of Canadian culture and school systems c). Increase parent involvement in the school and community 	
<p>9. When working with schools, what challenges have you encountered working with refugee families?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link to research on home/school relationship ▪ Link to research on cultural mediation/ cultural insider, and identity ▪ Link to research on refugee health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Several Ministry outcomes are related to home/school relationship; a). Helping children adjust to school culture and focus on learning while providing their parents with information and resources on settlement and immigrant issues b). Increasing parents' understanding of Canadian culture and school systems c). Increase parent involvement in the school and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Canada has a history of refugee settlement which can apply to the home/school relationship
<p>10. Have you noticed any difference in the adaptation process between non-refugee and refugee parents and children? How has this adaptation gap affected each family?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link to research on settlement and integration and in particular identity formulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link to Ministry outcome: Increase parent involvement in the school and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link to refugee settlement in particular related to mental health issues and identity

11. What successes have you experienced when working with refugee families?

- Link to research on refugee settlement and integration, cultural mediation, health, identity, insider perspective
- Link to Ministry outcomes: a). Helping children adjust to school culture and focus on learning while providing their parents with information and resources on settlement and immigrant issues b). Increasing parents' understanding of Canadian culture and school systems c) Increase parent involvement in the school and community d) Assess needs of immigrant families and barriers to successful integration e). Increase access to programs and services and work to improve the effectiveness of those programs
- Link to refugee settlement history in particular the role of the host country

12. What challenges have you experienced when working with refugee families?

- Link to research on refugee settlement and integration, cultural mediation, health, identity, insider perspective
- Links to Ministry outcomes: a). Helping children adjust to school culture and focus on learning while providing their parents with information and resources on settlement and immigrant issues b). Increasing parents' understanding of Canadian culture and school systems c) Increase parent involvement in the school and community d) Assess needs of immigrant families and barriers to successful integration e). Increase access to programs and services and work to improve the effectiveness of those programs

13. In what ways has your shared cultural background assisted you?

Have there been times when your cultural familiarity has hindered you?

- Research on cultural mediation and insider perspective
- Links to Ministry outcomes: a). Increasing parents' understanding of Canadian culture and school systems b). Increase parent involvement in the school and community c). Assess needs of immigrant families and barriers to successful integration
- History of refugee settlement role of host country and early patterns of settling in ethnic communities

14. When working with refugees has your overall experience as a SWIS worker been consistent with the outlined role of the position? If yes, in what ways? If no, explain how your experience has been different from the expected parameters of the job and why you feel there is an inconsistency.

- Direct link to all five intended Ministry outcomes.
- Link to role of host country in the settlement process

15. How do you report the successes and challenges of your role?

- Link to research on home/school relationship and insider perspective
- Links to Ministry outcomes: Increase access to programs and services and work to improve the effectiveness of those programs
- Link to quantitative approach to measuring success of SWIS program.

16. How do outside agencies communicate success to you?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on settlement and integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links directly to Ministry outcome: a). Increase access to programs and services and work to improve the effectiveness of those programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of settlement services in Canada
Refugee Family Experiences		
17. Is there a refugee family success story you can tell me?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to settlement research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to all Ministry outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of refugee settlement
18. What made the difference in this family's case?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to research on role of host country in settlement process Link to cultural mediation/ identity/ health 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of settlement services in Canada
19. Can you relay a story where you felt the program was not meeting the needs of a refugee family? What caused this situation to be unsuccessful?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to research on settlement process and barriers to settlement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to all Ministry outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of settlement services in Canada
20. What could have made their situation more successful?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to research on role of host country in settlement process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to all Ministry outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of settlement services in Canada
21. In your experience working with refugee families, is there one story in particular that you feel best exemplifies the refugee experience with this program?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to research on role of host country in settlement process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to all Ministry outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of settlement services in Canada
22. Overall, how has your experience as a SWIS worker working with refugee families matched the intended outcomes or expectations of the program?		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to all Ministry outcomes 	
23. If you were to recommend changes to the program, what might they be?		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to how SWIS workers articulated their role is connected to Ministry outcomes and what recommendations they suggest regarding the Ministry outcomes and their role 	

The above table serves to demonstrate that the interview questions were formulated in such a way as to demonstrate a connection between key research areas, Ministry outcomes, and history of refugee settlement. This was critical to ensure that questions elicited responses that were grounded in theory and policy and not simply open-ended

accounts of the SWIS workers' experience articulated through narrative without connection to larger constructs and theoretical frameworks.

4.7. Appreciative Inquiry: Interview Question Design

Alongside careful consideration of links to history, research, and Ministry-intended outcomes consideration of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was incorporated. As noted by Preskill and Tzavaras Catsambas (2006), AI focuses on developing questions that:

- Aim to identify and study moments of excellence
- Solicit information regarding successful processes and outcomes in connection to what is being evaluated
- Invite respondents to build on this information to provide feedback and insights on what should be done in the future to move toward improved outcomes.

(p. 77)

Appreciative Inquiry strives to seek responses from participants that communicate their concept of the nature, quality, and significance of, in this instance, a program (Preskill & Tzavaras Catsambas, 2006). Appreciative Inquiry is embedded in seeking to hear why things succeed rather than why things didn't succeed (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999). In this instance one section of the interview in this study focussed on the Successes and Challenges Faced along the Way. This section of the interview began by asking SWIS workers to articulate their measurement or view of success within the program. Subsequent questions specifically asked questions around success and challenges for refugee students and families as experienced by SWIS workers. The final section of the interview sought to collect first-hand stories of the refugee experience in the SWIS program as articulated through the SWIS workers. As Witherell and Noddings (1991) state:

Stories and narrative, whether personal or fictional, provide meaning and belonging in our lives. They attach us to others and to our own histories by providing a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives. (p. 1)

Within the context of Appreciative Inquiry a narrative-rich response creates data representing an opportunity to analyze high points and successes to enable more

positive experiences for future direction (Preskill & Tzavaras Catsambas, 2006). The questions in this interview, for the most part, asked for a recount of successful and challenging accounts of the program by eliciting this ‘narrative-rich’ response. Consistent with the AI model each question was followed by a query around what prompted success or, in the case of challenging experiences, what could have been done differently to promote success in the future.

4.8. Instrument Validation: Pilot Process

To assist in the formulation of the survey and interview questions a trial of both survey and interview questions was conducted in a different urban school district that also had a fairly well-established SWIS program with SWIS workers who had extensive experience working with refugee families. This served as an opportunity to pilot questions with practitioners currently in the field. It is often a critical stage to conduct a pilot opportunity to draw on the expertise in the field to assist in the shaping of the final research questions. According to Gall et al. (2007), “You should carry out a thorough pilot test of the questionnaire before using it in your study” (p. 236). This process was based on an open-ended discussion framed around reviewing an initial draft of survey and interview questions authored by the researcher. This validation experience proved to be a very useful stage in the research design process as the feedback from these three SWIS pilot participants offered insight and relevance in editing and shaping the survey, and, in particular, the final interview questions. The question of their (SWIS) perception of success in this role was key to questioning how SWIS workers measure success in their role. These three SWIS pilot participants agreed it was a good plan to rank responses of the five Ministry-intended outcomes and agreed that the three areas—importance, implementation, and time—were relevant lenses to view the outcomes. This meeting culminated in a revision to the earlier intended interview questions. Some questions were refined, while other questions in the final interview process were directly formulated by the three SWIS pilot participants. Three questions were added to the interview and two were deemed not necessary and the remainder were reviewed for clarity and purpose. The SWIS workers in the pilot process asked the intended response on some of the questions, essentially asking what I hoped to learn from the responses. This indicated that clarity around the question was required, which was reflected in the

final product. This was an important step as initially the interview questions were based on the researcher's perception of what is important information to collect from the field and what to ask SWIS workers regarding their front-line experience. Admittedly, the question of "How do you measure success in your role" likely would not have been part of the final data had the field test not occurred. Similarly this group felt it was important to tease out information around the adaptation gap between generations and various family members as so often perceived by SWIS workers as an area of concern within the families. This pilot group provided the emic perspective to guide the research questions and support an authentic approach to the process. They agreed that a case study approach would be complementary to what they perceive as a very heavy emphasis on quantitative reporting of the SWIS program. Based on this meeting, a final product included the culmination of several new questions, some original questions eliminated, and the relevance of others verified by SWIS practitioners. As the SWIS workers' experience was the focus of this study, taking this initial step of piloting the original questions on practitioners was a valid stage of the research process.

As a result of suggested edits to the survey questions by the pilot group of SWIS workers, the revised survey was ready to be administered to all SWIS workers in the target district. The final survey copy was a paper copy that included 13 questions to determine SWIS worker backgrounds, experience working with refugees, and willingness to participate in the second stage interview. A total of 26 SWIS workers were surveyed, at one time, of which 13 had the requisite requirements: SWIS worker experience working with refugees and a willingness to participate in the personal interview. Five surveyed were not currently nor did they have past history as a SWIS worker; therefore, they were not eligible for the second stage interview. As well five of those surveyed had no experience working with refugee clients and the remaining three did not consent to a personal interview. Along with the survey administered to all SWIS workers present at the school start-up meeting, 2011, a letter of introduction was provided which included: an explanation of the research project, my role as principal researcher, a description of their involvement, assurance of confidentiality, and confirmation (ethics approval) that the research project was supported by both the researcher's university and the school district studied (see Appendix A). Additionally, a letter of consent was provided for those who volunteered to participate in the interview stage of the project. The 13 SWIS workers represented a diverse sample of perspectives

and backgrounds. This was fortunate and enabled a deeper insight into the role of SWIS working with a variety of newcomers and their families. Some SWIS workers worked exclusively with refugee families while others had varying degrees of involvement with refugee families. Twelve SWIS workers had experience immigrating to Canada and represented unique immigration experiences and immigration classes. Responses to my request for interviews were prompt and interviews were scheduled immediately following the initial meeting. This, for me, demonstrated an eagerness of SWIS workers to participate in my research that resulted in a timely interview schedule and subsequent data collection.

4.9. Data Analysis

Data analysis was derived from transcribed interviews of all 13 SWIS participants. Each interview was carefully transcribed by the researcher and proved to be a valuable experience. This process assisted the researcher to recall each interview in great detail as well as an opportunity to once again hear any nuances or emotion in the responses. During the transcription process it appeared that common themes were apparent throughout. The original intent was not to code the data, yet it appeared that key themes had arisen and needed to be substantiated. As these themes were not expressed with precise wording that could be cross-referenced through a coding program, a basic tally system was implemented to calculate responses that supported the themes. Each interview was read through carefully and a simple tally system was used to indicate how many times responses related to each of the themes. This was necessary as concerns around health for example, were expressed in many different iterations as expressed through direct SWIS worker quotations in the following subheadings. As well, the notion of refugee preparedness was voiced throughout. As with the other key themes, interviews were read and words and statements that expressed refugee preparedness were tallied. This will be presented as Tables 5.2 and 5.24 and discussed in the next chapter.

To address concepts of validity and ensure different perspectives of challenges and successes of SWIS workers are represented accurately this research study enlisted the triangulation process. For Stake (2006):

Triangulation for a multi-case study serves the same purpose as in a single-case study: to assure that we have the pictures as clear and suitably meaningful as we can get it, relatively free of our biases, and not likely to mislead the reader greatly. (p. 77)

Triangulation follows what Stake refers to as a classic strategy and calls on the researcher to see if the new views presented in this current study were achieved by first demonstrating the researcher's knowledge in the field, as well as presenting current information reported on the program. According to Brewton and Millward, case study validity can be met using certain criteria: significance, consideration of alternative perspectives, sufficient evidence, and sensitivity and respect shown throughout the research (as cited in Stake, 2006). The significance of the topic was outlined in the introduction, alternatives or other perspectives are represented as other research on the program, sufficient evidence, I believe, was demonstrated by the extensive interviewing of a diverse group, and finally sensitivity and respect was shown not only by my own keen interest in the field, but also all steps were taken to ensure appropriate research protocol was adhered to.

This study examined one SWIS program—case—in a large urban school district, and draws on 13 individual voices within the case. It is not a multi-case of 13, as the intention is not to compare the participants in any way, but rather the intent is hear the rich description of the case as a whole. Robert Stake (2006) suggests that, “Comparison is a competitor to probing the study of a case” (p. 83). He outlines that the comparative nature of cases would draw attention on points of contrast rather than the rich description of each case that is necessary if the research is to contribute to a meaningful understanding of the case as a whole. The rich description, as suggested by Barritt (1986), recognizes the practitioner's viewpoint as impactful to the case:

The rationale is not the discovery of new elements, as in natural scientific study, but rather the heightening of awareness for experience which has been forgotten and overlooked. By heightening awareness and creating dialogue, it is hoped research can lead to better understanding of the way things appear to someone else and through that insight lead to improvements in practice. (p.102)

4.10. Delimitations of the Study

This study is focused on one SWIS program situated in a large urban school district. This was a deliberate choice as the best way to examine how this program operates. This large urban school district provided a broader perspective than other school districts, as it had been operational since the outset of the BC SWIS program, thus offering an experienced group of SWIS workers to interview. In addition to the level of SWIS workers experience, this district is diverse in population and has a proportionately large population of refugees in comparison to other neighbouring school district SWIS programs. This district was chosen as a healthy representation of refugee populations; therefore, providing a diverse cross-section for research. This district provided a bounded case to research. Data from this study is based on open-ended interviews with 13 SWIS reflecting distinctive ethnic backgrounds seeking a “purposeful maximal sampling” (Creswell, 2003). These questions provided a guided interview with deliberately crafted questions to ascertain mainly how the program is operating in relation to Ministry outcomes, and to hear the successes and challenges around delivering the program within the refugee context. The questions that were open ended provided an opportunity to express the individual experiences of each SWIS participant.

4.11. Limitations of the Study

This study endeavoured to examine as complete a range of SWIS workers as possible; however, given the timeframe and the decision to focus on a particular school district, responses reflect only one group of SWIS workers. The participants in this school district do represent a robust sample, but there may be SWIS worker voices in other school districts that would respond to the questions, in particular the ranked questions, in a different manner. To address potential different perspectives from other programs this researcher did seek input from an adjacent school district SWIS program. Focussing on a large urban district does not reflect the experience of those SWIS workers who work in smaller less urban school districts.

Participants in this study were volunteers; therefore, the study is limited to those who agreed to participate and met the criteria. Reasons for participating were not articulated to the researcher; therefore, any potential external motivating factors are not

demonstrable. Some participants in this research have had some professional experience with the researcher that could reflect a willingness to participate to assist the researcher. Some participants may have wanted an opportunity to express their opinion for reasons beyond the control of the researcher.

Chapter 5.

Findings

5.1. Introduction

Findings will be presented by examining key themes and a preliminary stage of settlement whereby many refugees are entering the SWIS program unequipped to begin the settlement process due to barriers based on past experiences and dispositions. These themes were found to run across the interview sections and will be discussed at the beginning of this chapter. This is a deliberate starting point and is presented at the outset rather than conclusion of this chapter as a way of beginning this section with a clear understanding of the pervasiveness of these findings and to serve as a framework for understanding the interview question analysis. With this in mind, what follows next is a sequenced approach to presenting the data collection that begins with an overview of the participants, followed by a chart demonstrating the emergence of key findings in the research leading to the introduction of the early stage of settlement experienced by some refugees followed by the data to support these key findings and provide other information to add to this research. The interview responses that lend themselves to a full analysis will be presented under the same sections that they were posed during the interview: Program Outcomes, Challenges and Successes Met along the Way, and Refugee Family Experience. Interview responses are reported in various ways, for example: as a matrix, a series of graphs, narratives, etc. Furthermore, some presentation methods may incorporate more than one question/response as one chart, etc. as some questions may lend themselves to this blending. This presentation style will provide a flow of information from concrete to anecdotal. The richness of the anecdotal is better understood knowing the program outcomes and the successes and challenges. To support this it is crucial to understand the program outcomes, or key findings, that will help to frame the anecdotal responses articulated later in the chapter. To begin with an overview of the research participants is provided.

5.2. Participant Selection and Overview

As outlined in the preceding chapter, the purpose of the initial survey to all SWIS workers in this district was to ascertain SWIS worker backgrounds and experience as SWIS workers, and willingness to participate in a one-hour interview; 13 were invited to participate in an interview based on their work with refugees and their agreement to participate in the research. The final cross-section of SWIS workers represented in the interview sample reflected different genders, several different ethnicities, varied experiences and education, and different lengths of time in Canada as indicated in the previous chapter. The following, Table 5.1, represents a summary of SWIS participants.

Table 5.1. Summary of SWIS Workers

Country Experience	Background/experience	Refugee Work Experienc e
Burma 10 mos.	Social worker Burma and UN in Bangladesh Compassionate eye and heart to help those in need Has lived in many countries	Yes, extensive
Burma 3 yrs. 7 mos.	Experience as a refugee and immigrant Understanding of settlement process in new country Likes working with people, I chose this role	Yes, extensive
Burma 4 yrs.	Teacher in refugee camp (Thailand) Education Co-coordinator Camp Committee Nursing—refugee camp Interpreter in Canada Volunteer Community and School refugee camp Volunteer with students and parents	Yes, extensive
Canada Oct 2007 (beginning)	Settlement experience inside/outside classroom ESL teacher for adult 1995-2007 Volunteer settlement services	Yes, extensive
El Salvador 4 yrs.	English instructor/language	Yes, extensive
Ethiopia 3 yrs., 1 yr. as SWIS worker 2 yrs. as Multicultural Worker	Interpretation services for the UNHCR in Cairo Interpreter/translator Vancouver Refugee Board Settlement Worker (Burnaby Multicultural Society) Multicultural Health Broker—BC Multicultural Health Settlement Worker Diversity	Yes, average

Country Experience	Background/experience	Refugee Work Experience
Iran 3 yrs.	Activist for equal rights (Iran) Teacher 7 yrs. Bachelors' Degree in Education Political activist and former political prisoner Speaks four languages Very interested to make a difference in newcomers' lives in Canada	Yes, limited
Kenya 3 yrs.	BA Social Sciences Interest in working with oppressed Shared similar stresses as a refugee Worked in same capacity at 2 different organizations	Yes, extensive
Nicaragua 4 yrs.	BFA—Teaching Political activist in Nicaragua working with under-privileged Employment Counselor 8 yrs. in Canada Settlement worker for Community organization in Canada 4 yrs. Active in Art organizations (current)	Yes, extensive
Russia 3 yrs.	Language teacher: Russian and French/ Russian comparative Literature to foreign students in Russia and Middle East Still teaching Russian in Canada Experience in non-profit organizations Montreal Vancouver: helping new immigrants and refugees as a counselor/translator	Yes, average
Somalia 2.5 yrs.	Came to Canada as a Government sponsored refugee and experienced difficulties that new immigrants face when they settle. After 9 mos of settlement in BC began volunteer work to help newcomers from Somalia Outreach worker with Pacific Immigrant Resource Society (current)	Yes, extensive
South Sudan 3 yrs.	Since 1989 working with NGOs in Egypt 10yrs Experience in Quebec City working with displaced women and children	Yes, extensive
Taiwan 3 yrs.	MA degree Education working in adult education HR training Volunteers at crisis centre Volunteers in community supporting immigrants	Yes, limited

By and large all SWIS workers responded to each question on the interview; however, some questions were either not responded to or not asked by the researcher as the question had already been answered as part of a previous response. Only one question—(Question 2)—asked SWIS workers to rank their experience in a quantitative

manner. The first section of the interview, Program Outcomes and Expectations, asked questions to provide an opening insight into the perceptions of the SWIS role as voiced through the SWIS workers. These five questions sought to attain how the SWIS workers view their role in relation to the Ministry, their views on settlement and how it is different for refugees. The second section, Successes and Challenges Met along Way, was intended to elicit the field perspective of what is working well and what areas of the program need to be improved upon when working with refugees. The final section, Refugee Family Experiences, was structured in terms of the questions; however, the questions were open-ended offering an opportunity for full expression of the SWIS experience when working with refugees. The majority of the other questions elicited responses that were anecdotal or opinions expressed through narrative and at times factual or simply a yes/no response to questions. It is useful to highlight the different response styles as a way of demonstrating that the data can be viewed both qualitatively and quantitatively. For example Question 2 directly asks for ranked responses, yet several SWIS workers included a narrative around their numbered response. Similarly, many SWIS workers responded to questions that ultimately can be presented as a pie chart or graph. For reporting purposes, the SWIS workers have been given pseudonyms, and it is key to note that for the most part they are all from other countries of origin and although fluent in English some subtle nuances in their narratives reflect a speech style different to that of a native-born Canadian and will be present in some of the quotations highlighted. While pseudonyms are used to ensure their privacy is protected, individual profiles of the participants will not be reported to assure anonymity of all participants.

5.3. Key Findings

5.3.1. Three Key Themes as Barriers to Successful Refugee Settlement and Refugee Preparedness for Settlement

The two key findings of this research will be summarized. Three key areas emerged as barriers to settlement for refugees: health, home/school relationship, and identity. These barriers were pervasive throughout all 13 interviews and are considered significant. The three themes are related to prior life experiences and dispositions. The following describes these three themes:

1. **Health:** many of the challenges and barriers to success for refugees stem from health concerns. In this instance health refers to both physical and mental health. The interview responses by SWIS workers outlined health as a major concern for refugees as they attempt to settle.
2. **Home/school relationship:** According to SWIS worker responses, the home/school relationship is a complicated for both parties and an area that emerged as being a real barrier to successful integration into the school environment and culture. In this context this relationship was impacted in two distinct ways: 1. how the home environment affects student adjustment to school and 2. how prior understanding of the role of schools and cultural misunderstandings around this.
3. **Identity:** struggles to formulate or reformulate a new or altered identity. This theme was articulated as a barrier for both students and their parents as they attempt to settle in to their new community.

The second key finding of his research has resulted in the common finding drawn from the interviews with the SWIS workers is that many refugees face significant barriers, which deter them from beginning the settlement process. This finding will be discussed further in the next chapter. This finding suggests that a new domain needs to be included to standard ideals around moving from settlement to integration. This concept is represented as both a continuum and taxonomy and will be further discussed in the next chapter. This chapter will outline the stage that many refugees are arriving at before they begin the settlement process and eventual integration and the following chapter will expand upon this taxonomy as one of the major recommendations resulting from this research. This stage where refugees are not able to begin the process of settlement as typically understood due to very deep and fundamental skill and experiential deficits from their country of origin.

The current stage, referred to as refugee preparedness in this chapter, that refugees arrive at proved to be a pervasive barrier for them as they attempt to settle in their new community. These key findings will provide the framework for discussion throughout this chapter and will be examined in this order. By examining these themes in this order does not in any way rank the relevance of any particular theme, but rather discusses the themes in a somewhat sequential manner. In addition to these three themes and presentation of data in support of refugee preparedness for settlement the discussion will include and highlight the unique role of SWIS as they serve in a role as cultural mediators in addition to providing an insider perspective, for the most part, which has both its challenges and strengths. The role of SWIS workers is relatively new, 2008

in this research, and most aspects of the SWIS worker role are rooted in very complex social constructs requiring a unique skill set to provide the best possible service to all newcomer families.

5.3.2. Interview Questions and Supporting Comments and Quotes

Refugee preparedness for settlement and the three themes that posed major barriers emerged from responses throughout the interview process as expressed in Tables 5.2 to 5.24. Each interview was coded by response and commonalities were noted and tallied into the four categories that emerged from the data based on frequency. Responses to questions ultimately referenced either directly or indirectly to one or more of the following themes: refugee preparedness for settlement, health, home/school relationship, and identity. Each of the themes will be analyzed in the Chapter 6.. To begin it is important to realize how prevalent these themes were in response to the interview questions. Under each of these headings are the number of times the theme was mentioned and a brief synthesis of responses with supporting quotations from SWIS interviews. Each interview question will be presented individually (Tables 5.2 to 5.24).

Table 5.2 is in response to the first interview question. This question was intended to begin the data collection process with an understanding of SWIS workers' perception of the intended Ministry outcomes. The rationale to begin with this question was to determine the level of understanding of the intended outcome that the SWIS workers have and how they feel their current role meets the intended outcomes. This question included responses in support of two of the main themes of this research. This illustrates that at the outset of the interview process some of the themes were beginning to emerge.

**Table 5.2. Question 1:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
1. What, in your opinion, are the intended Ministry outcomes of the SWIS program? How were you told of these goals and their importance? Does that carry on in your day-to-day experience?	9	N/A	5	N/A

Refugee Preparedness. Comments around refugee preparedness were predominant in response to this question. SWIS workers noted that the program is particularly beneficial for the “hard-to-reach families”. Statements that exemplify this are: “Especially the hard-to-reach families. So these families usually have a lot of barriers and because of that they’re the ones who do not receive the settlement services in agencies. Good services, but they are not available to them (refugees), so they don’t use” (Mary, October, 2011). Several SWIS workers noted the value of the program being placed in schools, in particular, for those families that “would have slipped through the cracks”. One SWIS worker indicated this directly, “finding them on the street is very difficult, so I think the Ministry thought very well in putting settlement workers in the schools because families will always want their children learning. So in that way more families are receiving settlement services” (Mary, October, 2011). Mary articulated the concept that you can’t ask for what you need if you don’t know you need it, “People who are not at that point will not even know what to ask for” (Mary, October, 2011).

Home/School Relationship. Facilitating a home/school relationship was referenced frequently as a goal of the program. “I know the educational system in Afghanistan, so I try to break down and compare this is what we do there and this is what we are practicing here” (Oliver, October, 2011).

The next question was intended to directly explore SWIS workers’ experience working within the Ministry mandate. Although this research focussed on refugee settlement at this stage of the interview the questions were not specific to refugee experiences. That said, many of the SWIS workers in this research have caseloads that are predominately refugees; thus, the responses inadvertently reflect the refugee experience. This question will be presented quantifiably and explored in detail as part of the findings. The above information is provided to express how refugee preparedness and the three major barriers to successful settlement were articulated by SWIS workers in response to this question.

**Table 5.3. Question 2:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
2. Please respond to each Ministry-intended goal by indicating a) the importance, b) extent of the implementation and c) the time you spend on this in your experience working with refugee families. Please respond by using the following Likert scale: 1: none 2: some 3: moderate 4: considerable 5: significant				
	2a 4	2b1	2b 4	N/A
	2b 1	2e1	2c 6	
	2c 1		2e 1	
	2d 1			
	2e 3			

Question 3 was included to determine early in the interview process if SWIS workers' experiences had assisted them in reaching the Ministry mandate. As outlined below three of the four themes were expressed through responses to this question.

**Table 5.4. Question 3:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
3. How has your experience as a SWIS worker enabled you to reach these intended outcomes?				
	5	1	3	N/A

Refugee Preparedness. Many comments by SWIS workers reflected the value of their shared cultural background and immigration experience as being valuable as they strive to meet the intended outcomes. In particular a shared understanding of barriers around refugee preparedness and a shared culture and language were advantageous. For example, "You cannot guide people to get resources if you don't know where they are going" (Mary, October, 2011).

Health. Colleen cited trauma as being a significant barrier in her experience, "we refer them to trauma counseling" (Colleen, October, 2011). She went on to explain the depth of trauma for some of the refugee mothers, "The mothers are dealing with all kinds of stuff, they've been raped, multiple times, most of them, even one woman's own husband tried to kill her" (Colleen, October, 2011).

Home/School Relationship. In their experience the home/school relationship was noted as being a challenge, and at times connected to refugee preparedness, “They don’t know how to function as a family, although I think they think they know how to function as a family, but in terms of schools’ expectations they’re not functioning as a family...the support is not there for the kids” (Colleen, October, 2011).

The next question lays the groundwork for SWIS workers’ impressions and perceptions of the settlement process. All four themes were articulated in response to this question.

**Table 5.5. Question 4:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
4. How do you best describe the settlement experience?	8	3	4	1

Refugee Preparedness. This question had a very prominent refugee preparedness aspect. The stage of settlement readiness for some refugees is very low, “She said I walk into Superstore and I see all these foods, but I don’t know the numbers of the prices” (Douglas, October, 2011). In addition, “It’s just finding every basic thing, discovering every basic thing that they’ll need and how to go about getting all those basic necessities that they’ll need to survive in all the newness that they are experiencing” (Josette, October, 2011).

Health. This theme was expressed in terms of stress and trauma experienced in the responses; “Settlement experience is uh, could be traumatic and it’s a very difficult experience, and people who are unsafe and insecure suffer a lot from depressions and fears and trauma” (Mary, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. Again the home/school relationship factored into barriers around settlement and in this instance what constitutes settlement. At times this relationship is affected by stress in the family home, “sometimes children going to school in different mood because of what is going on at home” (October, 2011).

Identity. Identity was expressed as a barrier in the settlement process, and although not stated as frequently as other areas, the results of identity shifts can be dramatic, “Also like in family a role changing like between husband and wife, because it depends who knows English better, who finds work faster, so sometimes men losing their power” (Tina, October, 2011).

Question 5 was critical as a way of expressing how the settlement process is different for refugees as compared to mainstream immigrants. Again, all four themes were addressed in responses to this interview question.

Table 5.6. Question 5: Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
5. How is the settlement experience different for refugees?	12	8	5	5

Refugee Preparedness. This question was frequently answered by indicating the challenges around refugee preparedness. Respondents also noted that differences in services occur between Government Assisted Refugees, Sponsored Refugees, and Refugee Claimants. One SWIS worker noted, “For the claimant refugees on top of that are services that are not, they cannot receive yet” (Gerry, October, 2011). Colleen articulated part of this with a simple compelling statement, “The need is like a bottomless pit” (Colleen, October, 2011).

Health. In this instance, health was often mentioned as stress and trauma experienced by refugees. Past experience in refugee camps was fraught with fear and stress. In reference to refugees a SWIS worker stated that in the camps, “They are just chasing their safety” (Sophia, October, 2011). Upon arrival to the new country refugees may feel a sense of relief, “I’m here, my kids are safe, I don’t have to fear for their life; I’m not afraid of being raped or someone will come and take my son or take me, so in that way it’s great and happiness” (Sophia, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. This theme remains a large barrier for refugees and their families. For example, “For the most part (they) are not literate, have no language or the ability to learn it have this what I call a tunnel vision view of life because they got

used to one way of pretty much looking at things, got used to being given what they needed or wherever there might be experiences of the children going to “classroom” (indicated using quotation gesture), which is not quite that” (Josette, October, 2011).

Identity. This theme was referred to frequently, compared to other responses, to this interview question, in particular responses around the parents’ identity. For example Josette explained that for the first time some refugee parents are viewed as the leader of the household, whereas in refugee camps they were not in charge of their own household, “The whole idea of this children can only look up to me, there’s just me, and I can’t keep just looking up to another because there is no other person to actually look up to, which is what they we’re used to “(Josette, October, 2011). Often cited were changes to the family dynamic, “The man is the head of the household—what he says is what goes, so some of these woman are learning a new thing about having to stand on their own sometimes, about having to work sometimes just to bring in an extra income. A lot of these families break up because now the men feel very, um what’s the right word? Like they’re not in charge anymore” (Josette, October, 2011). In general views around one’s identity as a refugee in the host country, “It must be overwhelming, how do they conform to this, how do they ever fit in, even, or and how are they going to deal with their perception of how they are perceived, how they feel they are being perceived by people” (Colleen, October, 2011).

As the original intent of this research was to hear SWIS workers’ perceptions of their role, this next question served to demonstrate how they perceive success in their work. Responses to this question will be discussed and presented as part of the analysis of the interview questions below. As noted above, however, at least three of the major finding areas were noted.

**Table 5.7. Question 6:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
6. How do you measure success in your role?	5	1	1	N/A

Refugee Preparedness. For Mary and Jennifer they felt their success was measured by the success of refugees connecting to resources, “they feel lost they find us, we give them all the information” (Mary October, 2001). Further, “I find it rewarding when the families get access to what they need, and even though some of the resources don’t fulfill all of their needs, I really think that that is success. At least they get access to what they need” (Jennifer, October, 2011). Douglas works primarily with refugees and indicated how great the needs are of his families: “I would like to measure when somebody says I don’t need you anymore. I’ve never seen that yet” (Douglas, October, 2011). Josette’s comment indicates her success, “they can go shopping on their own” (Josette, October, 2011).

Health. Tina simply stated success as when they have general better health, “They ask for our advice and they have peace at home, good health, take care of all their health” (Tina, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. Oliver made the connection to the home/school relationship, “We have some kids who they are suffering from, the learning process is different, they have especially families in some cases even families they are illiterate so they don’t, they can’t help much” (Oliver, October, 2011).

This next question was included in the interview as the guiding research questions in this study were concerned with successes and challenges as perceived by SWIS workers. As well, three of the five stated Ministry outcomes directly relate to school adjustment.

**Table 5.8. Question 7:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
7. What successes have you experienced when working with schools?	4	N/A	8	3

Refugee Preparedness. Mary indicated that basic understanding around systems was a barrier for the families she works with, “I think families not knowing what to do with tons of paperwork in very difficult situations. We start dealing with each one,

whether it's government, whether it's immigration, whether it is health, whether it is school and we go putting all the pieces together" (Mary, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. As this question specifically asked about schools there is little doubt that many responses include comments around the home/school relationship. Assisting parent adjustment to school cultures was also noted as a measure of success, "Parents became more trust; they trust more teachers and what they say because like in many countries they're meeting with a counselor, psychiatrist or something it's very negative, so if somebody get a call from school or if we have to meet right away they come to school and they have negative mind set up or something. So we teach them that this is only for benefit your child; we want the best you want the best, let's work together" (Tina, October, 2011).

Identity. Changes in identity, in particular, fitting in were noted as important examples of success, "Something else how to feel like you already have your network, to have friends out of necessarily our neighbors or the one who was just sitting beside me in the class, for both parents and kids" (Sophia, October, 2011). One SWIS worker proudly noted a change in traditional family roles in reference to attending English class, "So he brought his wife and then another gentleman brought his wife and I said this is great. You know culturally maybe single mothers we think they are forced to go, but when you have a husband usually you to stay at home and look after kids, so those are some of the successes" (Cathleen, October, 2011). As well, as indicated by Oliver issues around identity may result from their age verses their ability "they haven't attended school at all, so there was a challenge at that school as well because age wise they are old, they can't fit with the small kids so there were so many ups and downs but we tried to break the time being with their age group and also at the same time using the material from the lower class" (Oliver, October, 2011).

As with Question 7, this next question is complementary and probes and the challenges facing SWIS workers when working with school communities.

**Table 5.9. Question 8:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
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8. What challenges have you encountered when working with schools?

3

2

10

1

Refugee Preparedness. Responses around refugee preparedness for this question were all around gaps in understanding of concepts of school. Therefore, the home school/relationship was a very powerful response to challenges working with schools. For example, “They never been at school themselves sometimes they don’t know how it’s work and why it’s like that and for refugee also it’s difficult because parents are very behind with English and here we have to facilitate as communication and teach them about healthy lunches and hygiene at school and budgeting children’s expenses and stuff” (Tina, October, 2011).

Home/school Relationship. In reference to the home/school relationship challenges around children with special needs was commented on three times. One SWIS worker noted: “The kids are a problem in school like autistic kids from the refugee camp. So they have a problem in school, the kid doesn’t understand what the teacher is meaning the kids are not behaving” (Ken, October, 2011). Wanda indicated, “I think lack of resources especially for the special needs kids. Recently I have a lot of special needs kids but the school just don’t have the resources and especially for one profoundly deaf kid” (Wanda, October, 2011). The parents were also struggling with understanding how their special needs children are offered inclusive education. For some this is a new concept. For Oliver, documentation around school policies was viewed as a challenge for schools when dealing with refugees. He noted that as a result students often miss out on valuable field study experiences, “When they are not having medical coverage, it’s an issue at school, so for the school and activities out of school, in the school, so when they don’t have coverage there is a limitation. These are the challenges that we are going through” (Oliver, October, 2011).

As communication between SWIS workers and schools is key to ensuring the program operates successfully it was important to get a sense from SWIS workers around the flow of communication. Question 9 addresses this. Very few responses for this question referred directly to the key findings in terms of the themes. Instead respondents talked about informal conversations with school staff and discussions with their manager and school administration. Thus, this response will be further discussed later in the chapter.

**Table 5.10. Question 9:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
9. How do the schools communicate success to you?	N/A	N/A	2	N/A

Next, Question 10 asked SWIS workers to refine their perceptions of challenges working with schools in terms of specifically managing refugee settlement. Only four SWIS workers responded to this question. The remaining SWIS workers had already responded to this in their previous answers and did not add any additional comments. These four respondents focused on how it can be different for refugees. Gerry pointed out the hopeless feeling of one student who is a refugee claimant and unsure of the future, “They say what for? Lack of enthusiasm, lack of encouragement completely, so we do find people to talk to them, counseling, but it’s very little we can tell them because they will say “we’re going to leave anyway” (Gerry, October, 2011).

**Table 5.11. Question 10:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
10. When working with schools, what challenges have you encountered working with refugee families?	N/A	N/A	2	N/A

Home/School Relationship. Mary indicated that her only challenge in this large school district was that at times there is a lack of awareness of the SWIS program as a resource, “I think sometimes it’s the understanding of what we do, sometimes they might miss a family or two because they don’t know yet” (Mary, October, 2011). Again, as mentioned by Jennifer, differences in concepts of schooling factored in, “A lot of time we end up educating giving an orientation to parents over and over again” (Jennifer, October, 2011).

Question 11 asks SWIS workers to consider the adaptation process for both parents and their children and how it might be different from both points of view. As well, this question concerns itself with the impact of an adaptation on families.

**Table 5.12. Question 11:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
11. Have you noticed any difference in the adaptation process between non-refugee and refugee parents and children? How has this adaptation gap affected each family?	4	4	4	8

Refugee Preparedness. “The refugee families, parents plus children are still learning how to write and learn the basic 1, 2, 3, / A, B, C, write their names” (Josette, October, 2011). Josette further indicated concerns around refugee preparedness, “Getting off a bus, you have to get out at a certain place and addresses. It’s much faster for a non-refugees” (Josette, October, 2011). Also noted by Ken, “The refugees they come from the, you know, low literacy skills, they come with no tools to work in this country and the first challenge for them is, is you know, for refugees, is the language is a big barrier for them” (Ken, October, 2011).

Health. Health in this regard referred to mental health impacted by their prior experiences or the current stresses they are facing in their home environment and beyond. Mary noted the impact of war, “War nobody likes to leave their country because there is a war chances are they suffered a very traumatic situation” (Mary, October, 2011). In terms of stress between parents and their children resulting from the adaptation gap Susanne and Mary both expressed this concern, “The parents, sometimes they feel a little bit like, like stress, stressed themselves because, but their kids, sometimes the kids, like the kids learn very fast but the parents are happy if they can like depend on their kids” (Susanne, October, 2011). And, “They expect the children will give them answers, will know what to do; they get angry with the children if the children didn’t interpret the right way. So the children get pressures they should be having” (Mary, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. The home/school relationship was affected by different understandings by refugees of school processes. For example, “In Somali culture never would a kid and a parent be called together, you know, by someone of authority because that’s not the culture” (Douglas, October, 2011). Also noted by Tina, “Immigrants they know the difference between their school and here school and refugees sometimes they don’t” (Tina, October, 2011). In more general terms, but

referring to school culture Cathleen remarked, “Think culture shock and how the kids want to be part of the culture right away where the parents are not ready yet” (Cathleen, October, 2011).

Identity. The adaptation gap for refugees appears to be a large barrier in terms of identity. Several SWIS workers indicated the role reversal happening in families and the vulnerable position this places both children and parents. It was noted that often the children assume responsibilities due to their early acquisition of English that otherwise they would not assume in their country of origin. For example, “They (children) have to sometimes accompany parents to lawyers, to immigrations, to doctors, and receive a lot of pressures from the ones who are talking through them, so they are dealing with adult problems with their mother’s health, with their father’s health. They’re dealing with money situation; they’re hearing absolutely everything that they shouldn’t be listening to because they’re youth, they’re young” (Mary, October, 2011). Similarly noted, “Parents they lose their position in the family the kid is actually become the interpreter, the translator, you know so the parent’s actually, power decreases. Their kids, for example, to go with them to the Welfare office or to the hospital, clinics, and then if you need this kid then you can’t also punish them” (Douglas, October, 2011). This situation can result in tension in the home and ultimately, “A lot of families break up because the dad feels useless” (Josette, October, 2011). Finally, Cathleen stated that, “I used to be the breadwinner, not breadwinner, but at least the one who be going in the line-up in the morning at camp and get the food and take, and I used to also discipline and be in charge of my kids...here they learn the language before I learn anything and they are telling me, Dad, if you yell at me I will call the police” (Cathleen, October, 2011).

Question 12 was intended to begin to focus on the narratives and stories from the field. This was a deliberately open-ended question to enable a spontaneous and authentic relaying of SWIS perceptions when working with refugee families.

**Table 5.13. Question 12:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
12. What successes have you experienced when working with refugee families?	4	2	3	2

Refugee Preparedness. Responses around success for this question were mostly citations of accomplishments around refugee preparedness, for example: “If the parents are well settled the kids will go to school and learn better than having difficulties” (Sophia, October, 2011). “So it’s the small things like if they can get on a bus and get to their destination” (Josette, October, 2011), “The fact that she got from her house and she got to her appointment in time was so huge” (Josette, October, 2011). As well Mary indicated, “I would say that is the most successful part of this puzzle is the parents are relieved and the children are allowed to be children because there is a third person there that can take that information” (Mary, October, 2011).

Health. Colleen shared a powerful example of a refugee mother overcoming incredible barriers. In this case the mother had many physical and emotional challenges, “Mom doesn’t have the ability to work and partly due to the traumas and partly due to very extensive physical problems. She needed to be on disability so it’s a matter of connecting. We connect them with whoever can help”. Barbara followed by indicating success, “She’s got some breathing space to raise her kids who are really needing a lot of help and she just wants to assist them Colleen” (Colleen, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. Douglas viewed success as, “When we see them going to school or supporting their children to join a sport activity. I’ve been helping parents register, you know, their kids I mean some parents who thought their kids would be part of school, we help them stay in class, advising parents of their rights” (Douglas, October, 2011). Once again prior understanding of the school’s role was noted by Tina, “If the children go to school the parents sometimes they have no idea of even what they are doing there, they have to go to school, they do tours, where is the gym, where is the cafeteria, where is the school resources, so sometimes they don’t even know idea how education children spend all day there” (Tina, October, 2011). Josette stated her success as, “when they find jobs, when they go to school, and finish school, when the kids finish school and find a way to help out with the family, when the families are still together at the end of the day; that is still huge because you know you played a role” (Josette, October, 2011).

Identity. A basic interaction between a mother and daughter was noted as success, “I can’t even believe the smile on her face and the interaction that she had with

her child. It was so different because she would just, she didn't want her child to be around her, but today she's there and kind of nurturing, and this is progress" (Wanda, October, 2011). This reflects the theme of identity in that the mother's earlier interaction with her daughter was strained and fragile due to the mother's lack of confidence within herself.

For the most part the SWIS program utilizes the shared language and cultural background of SWIS workers and their clients. Thus, this next question, 13, directly asked SWIS workers to share their perceptions of both the advantages and challenges of this shared background.

**Table 5.14. Question 13:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
13. In what ways has your shared cultural background assisted you? Have there been times when your cultural familiarity has hindered you?	2	N/A	3	3

Refugee Preparedness. In general, comments around refugee preparedness were indicative of knowing the needs of clients and the ability to identify and articulate the needs. Wanda expressed this, "I think my experience really help me to understand where they come from and what they expect so that helps me tremendously in terms of building rapport and when I'm going to translation or to try to identify their needs able to help me to put them to contacts and translate in a way that the school or the community agency would not understand where it's coming from" (Wanda, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. Ken indicated that part of his role was educating the school on the cultural background of the student and the family, "The school has awareness of the cultural and then we try to integrate all these kids, you know, so to know that in our cities we have very highly different cultural people, we live living together" (Ken, October, 2011).

Identity. Having a shared cultural background assisted in understanding struggles facing refugees around identity, "So knowing those cultures and important elements, as I say you know there is some significant stuff for values for them you

should be careful about, especially gender wise, tradition wise so knowing them is an asset. So when I go to school for example, meetings, for example one of those elements—just one example—it is shaking hands. Shaking hands for ladies normally they don't shake, Muslim ladies they don't shake hands with other males in meetings" (Oliver, October, 2011). Shared experiences are helpful in the role of SWIS worker, "We came from the same country, our country of origin is the same and I also was raised in a refugee camp; I grew up in a refugee camp, so I know a lot about their background" (Jennifer, October, 2011).

Question 14 was included in the interview to provide SWIS workers the opportunity to communicate any ways in which they felt there may be inconsistencies in the intention of their role and the reality in the field.

**Table 5.15. Question 14:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
14. When working with refugees has your overall experience as a SWIS worker been consistent with the outlined role of the position? If yes, in what ways? If no, explain how your experience has been different from the expected parameters of the job and why you feel there is an inconsistency.	4	N/A	1	1

Refugee Preparedness. Refugee preparedness appears to be where the program mandate and the fieldwork may be inconsistent. Douglas noted, "I think the people who made the rules never dealt with refugees, I don't think or dealt with a real situation. I think everything is easy on paper" (Douglas, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. The following is an example of how SWIS workers can work directly with the school and student to achieve a better outcome for the student, "Maybe counseling on how they can change their way of, conflict resolution. We saw some of the newly arrived refugees, the kids, going in that direction (juvenile behavior). I thought if we could find ways that they can feel they have something to contribute, they're not just empty refugee kid here" (Cathleen, October, 2011).

Identity. Josette indicated her own personal thoughts around her identity within the role, "My outlined role, I guess it started with what is my role in this position helping

the families to adjust to the culture. At the end of the day this, you're a Settlement Worker, you're helping the families settle in the settlement process. If they are able to settle and stand on their two feet and find a life, then I think you played your role" (Josette, October, 2011).

This next question was included to gain an understanding of how SWIS workers communicate and report their experiences.

**Table 5.16. Question 14:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
15. How do you report the successes and challenges of your role?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

There were no responses to this question that alluded to the four key areas. Responses to this question are represented as a pie chart and discussed later in the chapter. As a part of the SWIS program mandate is to connect families to services this next question served to provide SWIS workers an opportunity to share their view of the communication flow between outside agencies and SWIS workers.

**Table 5.17. Question 16:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
16. How do outside agencies communicate success to you?	2	1	N/A	N/A

Similar to Question 15 there were only two responses to this question that referred to the four key areas. Gerry noted how counseling services are outreached and provided an example of collaboration between SWIS workers and agencies to meet refugee needs. "We don't offer counseling so whenever the counseling is needed it's there sometimes we just have to recognize our own limitations" (Gerry, October, 2011). "The two organizations have talked, the managers have decided that it's fine and so we go ahead, we do it and usually it works well and the families get the help, we give the

workshop and the other organization gets the service they provide.” (Gerry, October, 2011)

Responses to this question were mostly factual, such as by phone, or email, and are represented as a pie chart and discussed later in the chapter.

Question 17 asked SWIS workers to share a specific story to exemplify refugee success with the SWIS program. As an open-ended question it enabled a candid expression to elucidate success.

**Table 5.18. Question 17:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
17. Is there a refugee family success story you can tell me?	3	1	3	N/A

Refugee Preparedness. The following quotation serves to demonstrate an example of refugee preparedness and ultimate success, “So this particular family I’m just amazed because this is one of the families at the beginning we felt there is actually no future but now they are helping other parents and they are doing more” (Wanda, October, 2011). This example is a success story from taking a refugee family from Burma with many needs and assisting them to feel better adjusted to the community. Mary relayed a story of a single mother who was a refugee claimant, “This woman is a single mom with four children who faces a lot of difficulties. I have seen her come out from very difficult circumstances to live in a more moderate lifestyle, and to support the children” (Mary, October, 2011).

Health. An example of assistance with the challenges of raising a disabled child was outlined by Cathleen, “The success that I can say was that children (siblings) were willing to take some of the trainings that this healthcare professionals were offering they were willing to divide the task also not only for allowing mom to go necessary places but we say no one can stay 24/7 looking after this child, you guys are support so mom can get even some respite care, so it was very great that, and as a result we see the family more supporting each other and more becoming a little more self-sufficient than before” (Cathleen, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. Susanne presented a success story where her refugee client ended up volunteering to help other families connect to schools, “First I just like helping them for, at the beginning, like for registering in school, but later she can do by herself she can also, then later she can help all the other families. Because, like for example, in schools sometimes the school needs help for like to interview their parents, she can also help” (Cathleen, October, 2011).

The next question follows up on the previous question by specifically asking what enabled success in this individual family success story.

**Table 5.19. Question 18:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
18. What made the difference in this family’s case?	3	1	3	N/A

Refugee Preparedness. What seemed to help refugee preparedness was accomplishing basic aspects of daily life as noted by Susanne, “helping her how to learn, for example, how to get like for she has an appointment doctor, dental or something, but she doesn’t know how to get there maybe at the beginning” (Susanne, October, 2011).

Health. Tina directly stated that health was a barrier and that when they are healthier they are more prepared for the settlement process, “They are mentally and physically healthy and ready to live here” (Tina, October, 2011). Sophia raised an interesting point by indicating that the settlement process may be negatively impacted by refugees resisting settlement in their new country. For some refugees they are dealing with the stresses encountered in their country of origin and new stresses associated with being somewhere you did not choose to be, “No one likes to leave his country, but when you are threatened, what will you do?” (Sophia, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. The following are examples of where the connection to school made a difference “That connection (to school) it made a big difference because without that nobody knows what to do but working with schools with counselor and then we found those kind kids that they were kind enough to share their time; that was great” (Oliver, October, 2011). Also, “These little things that the system

can do for her; her situation is improving and I think they live in a better place and if the mom is happier I think the kids can perform better (in school) and I think that's what they (Ministry and school district) told us, that's the idea they sold us and I do believe that it's true "(Gerry, October, 2011).

This next question asked the reverse of the two prior questions. Question 18 concerned itself with eliciting responses that articulated where the SWIS program was not meeting the needs of refugee families.

**Table 5.20. Question 19:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
19. Can you relay a story where you felt the program was not meeting the needs of a refugee family? What caused this situation to be unsuccessful?	3	2	1	1

Refugee Preparedness. According to Susanne, "So even you show them the bus once, two, it takes like it has to be like more than 10" (Susanne, October, 2011). Jennifer addressed this concern, "Examples included: not having a SWIS worker with the language required; 10-month gap in services, SWIS workers cannot be interpreters or conduct home visits as noted, "the program says that we cannot do home visits, but with government assisted refugees I feel that that is not working because when they first arrive here they didn't know, they have to start from scratch, they didn't know how to use stove for example. And they don't know how to use kitchen appliances and all that, so they need someone to demonstrate to show them how to operate those things properly" (Jennifer, October, 2011).

Health. Colleen outlined a scenario where the program fell short in terms resources, "One family in particular, this is one of the highest needs families I've ever met, the black hole I guess you could call it, just suck all the resources and it wouldn't necessarily change much" (Colleen, October, 2011). In this case the family had a special needs daughter and the parents were coping with their individual health issues whereby the father was frail, the mother was traumatized by early stress and both wanted custody of the child.

Home/school relationship. Susanne noted the lack of former schooling on the parent’s part as being a challenge, “It takes a while, because I know that some of the families they are never go to school, they never go to school, we try, for example, even we accompany the same this once, two, three doesn’t make any success” (Susanne, October, 2011).

Identity. In terms of identity, one SWIS worker cited the need to have a purpose as important to esteem and identity. “Yesterday a father told me if just anyone called me for work, whatever, please give them my phone number I will help, I’m not looking about for the money, I just want to be out do something, I felt his desperate for the feeling that he is useful” (Sophia, October, 2011).

Other barriers were beyond the scope of the program, yet impeded success of refugee family settlement: many SWIS workers had families that had to return to their country of origin, say challenges regarding the length of time it took to obtain legal documents, and saw families with substantial financial challenges. Nine SWIS workers responded to this question by outlining areas in which the program had limitations that permitted success. Examples included: not having a SWIS worker with the language required; 10-month gap in services, SWIS workers cannot be interpreters or conduct home visits as noted.

Question 21 is complementary to the preceding question and was included to enable SWIS workers the opportunity to express their perceptions of where the program could have had a more positive impact, or, if the challenges were due to program shortcomings or other circumstances beyond the mandate of the SWIS program.

**Table 5.21. Question 20:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
20. What could have made their situation more successful?	2	1	N/A	N/A

Refugee Preparedness. “A home visit. So they’re coming from a background of with not the conveniences they’re faced with her when they arrive, and simple demonstrations would help” (Jennifer, 2011). Cathleen cited her strategy for assisting, “I

just write a piece of his paper and then if they get lost, If they didn't know something they can show because like it is written in English and then they can show someone" (Cathleen, October, 2011).

Health. Gerry indicated how he connects clients to both school and outside agencies for support around mental health, "We take them to the our school psychologist, sometimes the kids and the families to the agency, there is a psychologist you know, who is working with the families, you know, how to combat all these situations" (Gerry, October, 2011).

Again, as this research was interested in hearing stories from the field as voiced through SWIS workers the following question was included to elicit this. Question 21 asked for a specific recount of the refugee experience with the SWIS program.

**Table 5.22. Question 21:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
21. In your experience working with refugee families, is there one story in particular that you feel best exemplifies the refugee experience with this program?	6	3	3	1

The following serve as exemplary comments as a refugee experience and supporting each of the themes:

Refugee Preparedness. "In just 1 year they have to learn the language and don't know these things, be able to get a job, so it's tough, it's tough for all of them—housing; rent; food; food bank a different kind of food that you don't know quite how to cook. Re-living the moments when they go through an experience, particularly when it's been a tough experience" (Josette, October, 2011).

Health. "These families have become so segmented, the stresses that they've been under have essentially shattered the people, but it shattered the families" (Colleen, October, 2011).

Home/school relationship. "They suffered a lot of abuse In their country, they came as refugees, as sponsored refugees, and through this program we were able to

support the children to understand their needs, to guide them into which schools they could go to because the trauma did not allow them to go to regular schools” (Mary, October, 2011).

Identity. “As a refugee it is very hard to feel a sense of belonging; you don’t feel like you belong anywhere and it makes it worse when you don’t speak the language, and uh, and you feel like you are different from other people, the way you dress, the way you live your life and everything, the way you eat” (Jennifer, October, 2011).

Question 22 served as an opportunity for SWIS workers to conclude with a reflection of their role and how it manifests within the SWIS program mandate.

**Table 5.23. Question 22:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
22. Overall, how has your experience as a SWIS worker working with refugee families matched the intended outcomes or expectations of the program?	4	N/A	N/A	N/A

For the most part this was simply answered yes with not a lot of narrative; however, the following offer samples of comments around this theme.

Refugee Preparedness. Colleen indicated, “We try to keep tabs on the neediest ones, the neediest ones don’t always ask” (Colleen, October, 2011). Jennifer expressed how much of her time is spent dealing with the emergent needs of her refugee families, “Their needs are so high sometimes we get so burned out” (Jennifer, October, 2011).

It was important to hear from SWIS workers how they felt the program could be improved upon, and/or elaborated on areas where they perceive the program to be working well. Question 23 asked SWIS workers to voice their recommendations.

**Table 5.24. Question 23:
Emergence of Key Findings based on Frequency in Responses**

	Refugee Preparednes s	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
23. If you were to recommend changes to the program, what might they be?	5	5	N/A	N/A

Because of the importance of this question, the results will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

These findings are the result of carefully reading through the interview responses and recording all responses that directly or indirectly correspond with the key findings. For example the word health may not have been stated precisely; however, words such as stress, trauma, or mental health were articulated as barriers facing newcomers, in particular refugees. Similarly, responses to the home/school relationship were often indicated as anecdotal and not specifically articulated as the home/school relationship. Comments around refugee preparedness were cited in all but four of the 23 questions. Only one question, Question 15, did not elicit a response to any of the four themes likely due to the question asking for a technical response indicating how SWIS workers report successes and challenges in their role. Four questions (Questions 4, 5, 11, and 12), cited all four themes in the responses. These questions asked specifically about the settlement process as well as the adaptation gap between students and their parents. These responses will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

In addition to the tables above the following are exemplary stories from the field to support the key findings. To understand the three themes and concept of refugee preparedness as stated by SWIS workers each theme is provided with impactful quotations taking directly from the participant interviews. Each theme highlights different categories within each theme. The narratives demonstrate how the theme may not have been articulated precisely, but the sentiment is there. These are in addition to the samples provided in Tables 5.2 to 5.24, and are included to set the stage for the pervasiveness of these findings throughout the interview responses. The data collection for this table is based upon an in-depth reading of SWIS worker interviews and a coding of responses according to the themes. When tallying responses each of the themes was recorded only once per interview question. For example, if a response to a single

question included the theme health three or four times the theme was recorded only once per question. Supporting quotes are provided for each of the themes and presented beneath as Tables 5.25 to 5.28.

5.3.3. Quotes from the Field: Evidence of Articulated Barriers

The concept of refugee preparedness was indeed articulated as a major barrier facing refugee families. The concept of refugee preparedness encapsulates many areas of day-to-day life that challenge refugee families. Table 5.25 serves to demonstrate the categories of refugee preparedness that were most frequently articulated by SWIS workers throughout the interviews. Refugee preparedness was referenced in other ways not expressed in this table; however, this table provides an understanding of some of the key barriers around the notion of refugee preparedness.

Table 5.25. Quotes from the Field: Refugee Preparedness

Category	Evidence
Learning the language	13
Adjusting to life outside of refugee camp	11
Finding employment/finances	9
Basic survival	8
Understanding the laws/rules/system etc.	8
Concerns with residence	7
Illiterate in country of origin	7
Lack of services for refugees	6
Getting around	5
Hard-to-reach families may not be connect to services	3
	77

The predominant barriers for refugees as noted above indicate the many different challenges facing refugees that reach far beyond learning English, which was incidentally a barrier commented on by all 13 SWIS workers. Eleven SWIS workers mentioned the past experience of life in refugee camps as being a critical barrier to settlement. This factor may be the root cause of many barriers and may manifest in all the other areas identified as themes. For example, learning the systems and issues around employment and residence are exacerbated for refugees who have no prior experience renting their own house and in some instances working to earn a living. As Josette noted:

But the whole idea of working hard to earn your money, to pay your rent, to buy food, to earn a living is such a new concept for them [refugee immigrants]. So it's different, settlement for them is different because you take them by their hand and do the basic walking before you even run, actually you do the standing first before you even do that walking. (Josette, October, 2011)

Tina also noted that refugee experiences had a substantial impact on settlement:

Because when they stay in refugee camp they have order what to do, because they don't have, as they have limitation, here they told them you can do that and you can do that, so they have get to used to this idea [freedom] first of all. (Tina, October, 2011)

These statements attest to the disadvantaged starting point in which refugees are attempting to settle in the host country. Most services provided to refugees are predicated on general understandings of basic economy such as working for a living and paying one's bills despite the language barrier. As noted by Josette, Tina and nine of the other SWIS workers many of the refugee immigrants come to the country without acquiring such basic skills and dispositions in their native country and need to learn these skills here. Concerns around health appeared to be a major barrier to settlement for refugees. There were other expressions of where health served as a barrier relayed by SWIS workers, but the following table highlights the key categories that impacted refugee health, both physical and mental.

Table 5.26. Quotes from the Field: Health

Category	Evidence
Mental health: stress, depression	6
Need for counseling	6
Effects of war	5
Trauma	5
Special needs children	4
Hygiene	3
Psychological	3
Domestic abuse	2
Safety	2
Sociological	1
	37

The main areas cited under the category of health demonstrated above show how intertwined the categories are. For example effects of war would very likely precipitate a need for counselling. The only category that does not fit under a mental health umbrella is the category of hygiene. Some exemplary comments are presented below. The effects of war were noted by Colleen:

These women have dealt with everything and more that a war can bring on women, and then they're trying to raise their kids in some kind of functional fashion. The mothers are dealing with all kinds of stuff; many of them have been raped. (Colleen, October, 2011)

Mary commented on an interesting phenomenon. She relayed how one mother had kept strong for her family in her home country, but when she finally felt safe in Canada she responded to the trauma:

As I spoke with the mother she said, when I was in my country I kept I was very strong because there was so much abuse and to protect myself and my children, but when I came to Canada it was like I didn't have to protect myself anymore and then I broke in pieces. I did not know what to do. So it was in Canada when she felt the effect of the trauma and the abuse not there, over there she needed to hold it together. (Mary, October, 2011)

The home/school relationship had several areas that proved to be barriers to successful settlement and integration into schools. The following table represents the key areas that were articulated as barriers to the home/school relationship.

Table 5.27. Quotes from the Field: Home/school Relationship

Category	Evidence
Meetings at school	8
Cross-cultural communication	7
View schools as authoritative and solely responsible for child's education	7
First experience with school	4
Reception at school	3
School system different from past experience	2
	31

The first two categories are concerned with home/school communication and the difficulties that may be experienced by refugees in an attempt to understand their new education system and their role in the system. Some of the concerns are not only

around the refugee parent's cultural misunderstanding, but can also stem from school staff not understanding the refugee experience as indicated by Colleen:

Families, parents can barely manage to even think of getting kids lunches and breakfasts, so and snacks together these are expectations of the school and schools can't figure out why these parents can't get it together like the rest of the parents. (Colleen, October, 2011)

This cultural awareness factor was also expressed by Mary:

So it was important for them [schools] to have a person who understood their background, what was happen and to relate that to the principals and to the rest of the community. (Mary, October, 2011)

Past refugee experiences, or lack of experiences around education systems and the structures of schools, were noted as barriers by 16 SWIS workers. Tina expressed this:

Parents became more trust; they trust more teachers and what they say because like in many countries they're meeting with a counsellor, psychiatrist or something it's very negative, so if somebody get a call from school, or if we have to meet right away they come to school and they have negative mind set up or something. (Tina, October, 2011)

The home/school relationship is a vast topic within the educational context. For the purpose of this study, and what was revealed through the interview process, the home/school relationship is based upon the cultural understandings of what school is and how one navigates the system. The challenges to successful integration in the school system went far beyond the language barriers. The role of the family in the education of the child was often not recognized at the same level of importance that the Canadian school system places on this relationship. The relationship between home and school identified an area that is deeply engrained in cultural misunderstandings or lack of prior school experience demonstrated by the student, and at times the family, causing tension in the settlement process. Much of the SWIS worker role is liaising between school, student, and family or guardians. There may be concerns around the lack of understanding due to inexperience in the school environment, or contrary attitudes toward a school's role and expectations placed on students, role reversal at home, and, for some, cases of domestic dysfunction all of which negatively impact a successful school experience. The home-school relationship is a critical piece and

certainly a large percentage of SWIS worker resources are aimed at improving this partnership.

Barriers created by concerns around refugee identity also had several distinct categories as represented by Table 5.28.

Table 5.28. Quotes from the Field: Identity

Category	Evidence
Family roles changing	10
Belonging/fitting in	4
Employment skills not recognized	3
Cultural differences in family values	1
Cultural differences: food, clothing	1
Culture shock	1
	20

The changing dynamic of family roles was by far the most substantial category under the theme of identity. Josette and Tina were two of the 10 SWIS workers that articulated this:

The whole idea of this children can only look up to me, there's just me, and I can't keep just looking up to another because there is no other person to actually look up to, which is what they were used to. (Josette, October, 2011)

Also like in family a role changing like between husband and wife, because it depends who knows English better, who finds work faster, so sometimes men losing their power or woman raising the kid at home have to go for cleaning jobs. (Tina, October, 2011)

In addition to changing family dynamics a sense of belonging impacted on identity. Jennifer articulated this nicely:

As a refugee it is very hard to feel a sense of belonging. They arrive in a new country you don't feel like you belong anywhere and it makes it worse when you don't speak the language, and uh, and you feel like you are different from other people, the way you dress, the way you live your life and everything, the way you eat. (Jennifer, October, 2011)

These four themes have been demonstrated as significant; therefore, the next part of the chapter will present refugee preparedness as a major finding followed by an exploration of the interview responses presented in relation to these key findings.

5.4. Refugee Preparedness

The large number of responses to the entire interview, 85, that indicated refugee preparedness as a barrier to successful settlement and integration led to the concept of the continuum and a taxonomy of the settlement process which will be presented in the next chapter. The concept is represented in two distinct ways: the first indicates a starting point, pre-settlement, along the continuum typically viewed as from settlement to integration and the second, the taxonomy, is used to represent the stages that exist prior to settlement in the hierarchy to integration. Eighty-five of these responses were directly related to refugee preparedness as an independent theme; however, within the other three themes barriers also support the notion of refugee preparedness. This is expressed as Table 5.29.

Table 5.29. SWIS Workers Responses to Themes: Entire Interview

	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Totals
Colleen	9	5	5	1	20
Jennifer	3	0	2	4	9
Mary	3	5	1	2	11
Susanne	10	1	6	0	17
Cathleen	13	3	3	2	21
Douglas	5	2	7	1	15
Tina	4	3	7	3	17
Gerry	4	3	3	1	11
Josette	8	2	5	2	17
Ken	8	4	7	0	19
Oliver	11	4	11	1	27
Wanda	3	4	2	1	10
Sophia	4	3	5	2	14
Totals	85	39	64	20	208

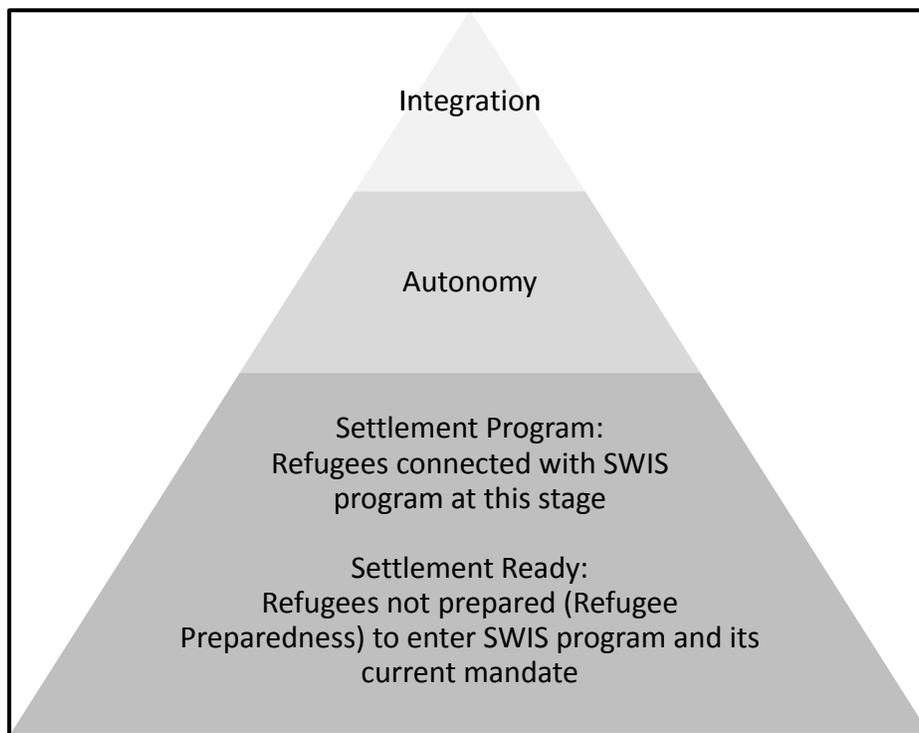
Note. Theme 1—Refugee Preparedness
 Theme 2—Health
 Theme 3—Home/school Relationship
 Theme 4—Identity.

Successful settlement is predicated on a mutual understanding of basic needs and the fulfillment of those needs for the newcomer; however, some families are not prepared to fully utilize basic needs such as housing, banking, shopping, and transportation etc. The following figure expresses the stage in which the findings suggest

exist. This has been articulated as Refugee Preparedness and exists below the level of preparedness in which refugees are equipped to enter the SWIS program based on the current Ministry outcomes.

Figure 5.1 represents where the current program operates and suggests a readiness factor required to best benefit from the SWIS program. There are many reasons why a refugee may not be settlement ready. Based on the interview responses there is a strong indication that some SWIS worker resources are operating at the bottom stage of the taxonomy; whereas the Ministry intention appears to be that the SWIS program operates at least at the Settlement Program stage of the taxonomy. Newcomers arrive at school districts and are immediately connected with the SWIS program, which focuses on settlement, not particularly on refugee preparedness.

Figure 5.1. Taxonomy of Settlement to Integration



These were the two key findings in this research as expressed through the themes. Further discussion and recommendations will be presented in Chapter 6. Beginning with the expression of these key findings prior to outlining the interview responses ensures the reader is aware and can fully appreciate the pervasiveness of

these themes. What follows next is the presentation of data extracted through the interview questions. Data will be presented in the same sequence of the interview beginning with Program Outcomes and Expectations.

5.5. Interview Responses and Other Findings

5.5.1. Structure of the Interview

The interview questions were divided into three sections (Appendix E) and will be examined in the same order: Program Outcomes and Expectations; Successes and Challenges Met Along the Way; and Refugee Family Experiences. The first four questions, part of the program outcomes and expectations, verified that all of the participants interviewed had a clear understanding of the Ministry objectives. The second section of the interview addressed the area of successes and challenges in the role including questions directly related to their work with schools. The final section of the interview honed in on the first-hand experiences by asking for exemplary stories from the field when working with refugee families. These areas were deemed as important to gain an understanding of the SWIS worker experience (see full interview protocol, Appendix E). The structure of the interview was intended to begin with an overall view of the role of SWIS workers to better contextualize the subsequent sections. It was important to conclude with stories from the field in order to obtain a rich qualitative data collection.

5.5.2. Program Outcomes and Expectations

The interview began with a starting point to determine what the SWIS workers recalled as the mandate of the program as outlined by the Ministry and how much of the mandate is being reached in the field in their opinion. This was done to ascertain a level of congruence or non-congruence with the Ministry objectives and the reported experience of SWIS workers in this school district. This interview question asked, “What, in your opinion, are the intended Ministry outcomes of the SWIS program? How were you told of these goals and their importance? Does that carry on in your day-to-day experience?” Eight SWIS workers did not respond directly to the implementation part of the question while the other five all believed this goal was part of their day-to-day experience. In retrospect all aspects of the question would have had a better response

had they each been a separate question as some SWIS workers answered their perceived role of the Ministry and did not finish up with the implementation piece. Table 5.30 summarizes their responses based on the established pseudonyms. There was certainly a clear understanding of SWIS workers' directive to help families adjust to school and community and to connect families to services as being key in the role. As noted by Jennifer, "I think the aims of our SWIS program is to do outreach, to help to reach families, families who don't know how to access community services and community resources" (Jennifer, October, 2011). While they could not all recall precisely how the Ministry objectives were relayed to them, they did recall hearing about their mandate early in their tenure as SWIS workers, and they all saw these goals as being part of their day-to-day service. Douglas did not recall specifically how he heard but speculated on what he thought the Ministry goal was, "I think the Ministry's intention, I think it's everybody's intention, is to make the newcomers, especially the refugees, self-sustained and actually independent maybe in a couple of years" (Douglas, October, 2011). This section of the interview demonstrated participant understanding of their work in relation to Ministry outcomes as well as their attitude on the settlement process, in particular with refugees. It was clear by the SWIS worker responses that all 13 understood the general intended outcomes or program goals as prescribed by the Ministry and all felt that they were working toward these goals on a day-to-day basis.

Table 5.30. How SWIS Workers View the Ministry Mandate for the Program

SWIS participants	Perception of Ministry-intended Outcomes	Source of perception of Ministry-intended outcomes	Day-to-day individual experience reaching Ministry outcomes
Oliver	Match to services and help at school	Past experience	Day-to-day
Colleen	Assist new immigrants integrate into society and settle in area	ISS (Immigrant Service Society) and from the school district	Absolutely we carry all these goals
Susanne	Settle their lives—education, health, transportation, kids like school	No specific recollection	No response to this part of question
Mary	Reach families, especially hard to reach families. The Ministry thought well placing this program in schools	No specific recollection	Yes, very much
Douglas	Make newcomers self-sustained and independent	Understanding of goals, but no specific recollection	No response to this part of question
Jennifer	Do outreach—help reach families who do not have access to community resources	No specific recollection	No response to this part of question
Cathleen	Having resources and services to meet needs of immigrants and refugees	From other agencies	No response to this part of question

Tina	Meeting families at school level—referral to agencies and facilitate settlement	No specific recollection	No response to this part of question
Gerry	Acknowledged the gap between clients and services, capture families at school level, alleviate settlement issues	One-week training from a Ministry representative	Yes
Wanda	Help immigrants and refugees integrate into school and culture, capture families at school level	Figured it out	No response to this part of question
Tina	Assist new families to settle, find outreach, especially for those who slipped through the cracks	No specific recollection	No response to this part of question
Josette	We are constantly asked for our numbers and to record all of our services to see if program is working	In meetings	Yes, it's ongoing
Sophia	Provide services to those coming from difficult circumstances	Was explained to us but did not specify by whom	No response to this part of question

Eleven of the 13 made direct references indicating that providing outreach by connecting families to community resources and services was an important aspect of their mandate. The other two did not directly state this; however, their responses were not that far off; they chose to focus on different aspects of the program in their response. Tina did not specifically mention outreach but said:

They want us to facilitate with newcomers and settlement and help them in the first few years to find their way here with the help with English language, with employment, job search, with cultural events and everything. (Tina, October 2011)

Six respondents indicated that helping families settle in general is part of what they perceive as the Ministry mandate. Eight SWIS workers very clearly articulated the value of placing SWIS workers in schools. They viewed this as a very strategic plan to ensure newcomers, in particular hard-to-reach families, are identified and connected to the services available to them that they may not have known about if left to their own devices. In fact Mary stated:

The agencies would help people who is pro-active and have a lot more knowledge of the rights. People who are not at that point will not even know what to ask for. Okay, so you need to find a way to reach them; finding them on the street is very difficult, so I think that the Ministry thought very well in putting settlement workers in the schools because families will always want their children learning. (Mary, October, 2011)

In response to this question several SWIS workers expressed comments related to refugee preparedness such as: “fall through the cracks” (Colleen, October, 2011) and “hard-to reach families” (Mary, October, 2011).

Overall, as indicated by the summary of participant responses, for the most part, SWIS workers view their role as set out by the Ministry to assist families in the settlement process by connecting them to schools, services, and society in general. This research did not ask during the interviews if ongoing training or reviewing of Ministry goals was part of their experience.

The next stage of the interview was to review the five intended Ministry outcomes for the SWIS program. During the interview process each participant was asked to review the five objectives of the SWIS program and respond in three ways:

- a. importance of objective as an overall mandate of the Ministry;
- b. level of implementation of objective in the field as noted by SWIS practitioners;
- c. amount of time SWIS workers spent working toward reaching this objective.

I stated that this was the only question in the interview where they would be asked to use a ranking system and more of a quantitative approach. The intention was to determine if the SWIS workers' experience was congruent in reaching the outcomes prescribed by the Ministry without directly asking the question. With these three perspectives, they were then asked to rank each one using a five-point Likert scale with a range of:

- none (1),
- some (2),
- moderate (3),
- considerable (4),
- significant (5).

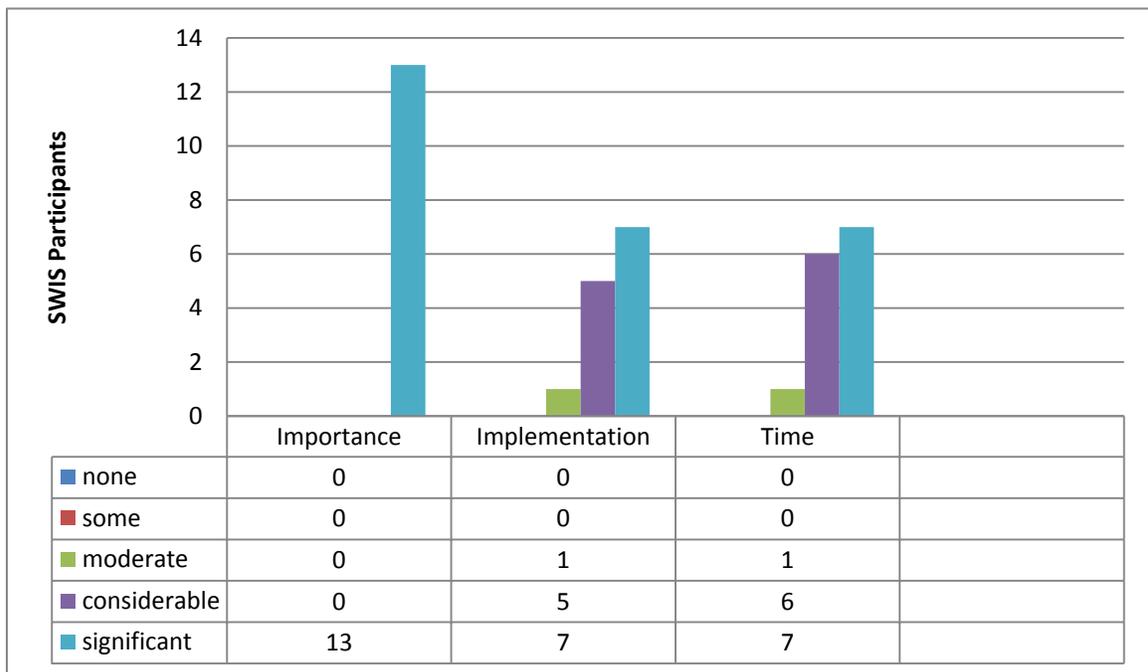
This question, along with the ranking system, was reviewed as part of the pilot process. All three SWIS participants in the pilot stage agreed that this measurement and questions around implementation were appropriate and they indicated that the questions made sense and were not difficult to respond to. These rankings provided an

appropriate range of responses. The following five bar graphs (Figures 5.2 to 5.6) represent the quantified responses to each of the five Ministry-intended outcomes.

5.5.3. First Ministry Outcome

The following Figure 5.2 represents the first of the five Ministry-intended outcomes for the SWIS program.

Figure 5.2. Helping Children Adjust to School Culture and Focus on Learning While Providing their Parents with Information and Resources on Settlement and Integration



Importance of Outcome

Thirteen SWIS workers viewed this outcome as significant, yet the implementation and time spent on this outcome indicates a gap in what is considered to be very important and what is occurring in the field. Eleven out of 13 respondents answered the question directly with a rating or the word significant with no supporting comments. Two SWIS workers briefly commented as part of their answer before moving to the next question. This could be, in part, that this was the first question asked and they did not realize that comments would be welcomed by the interviewer. As the interview progressed the flow of comments increased. The ease in which the response

of significant came from all 13 SWIS workers indicates no hesitation on their part that this is a significant outcome. The following two comments are exemplary:

It's very important because many people coming here without realizing, like how life is different here, and how different regulations, different rule and even some people learn about hygiene and culture and school culture. (Tina, October, 2011)

As a SWIS mostly our goal is focus on settlement issue, but for some cases, for example, in my case because we don't have a multicultural worker so I'm the both of them, so this one actually it fits in with what I'm doing, so I'm dealing with schooling stuff, helping students at school. (Oliver, October, 2011)

Implementation of Outcome

Seven SWIS workers responded to this outcome with more than a number or ranking by expanding on their answer through narrative. Seven SWIS workers viewed this as significant, five viewed it a considerable, one as moderate, and one SWIS worker did not rank the implementation in the field but rather responded by saying it depends. Her reason for saying it depends was based on the differences between the newcomers' background skills, education upon arrival, and willingness to seek assistance once in the SWIS program. Comments were generally around providing information to parents and focussing on the needs of the clients. Two SWIS workers mentioned the difference between their role as SWIS workers versus the multicultural workers, who work directly with schools, as making this question difficult to answer. One SWIS worker cited that the implementation of this outcome was moderate and that there was not enough time in the day to perform their role. SWIS workers indicated that there are too many barriers that prevent implementation of this outcome. Based on seven responses out of 12, one SWIS worker did not answer this part of the question, close to 50% of SWIS workers viewed this outcome as being significantly implemented in the field, yet all 13 viewed this outcome as significant in terms of importance. This suggests a gap in what is perceived as very significant and what is occurring at the practitioner level.

Time Spent on Outcome by SWIS Workers in the Field

Seven SWIS workers responded that they are spending significant time in the field implementing this outcome. Six SWIS workers viewed this as considerable, one did not want to rank it initially, and one ranked the time spent as moderate. The SWIS worker that did not want to rank this aspect of the question stated:

I don't know how to rate it actually because it would take kids to get settled in school from maybe at least 2 to 3 years, especially with the younger ones. Older ones take a long time, so I don't know how to rate that. (Jennifer, October, 2011)

When asked how much of her time was spent on a day-to-day basis helping children adjust to school and focus on learning, she subsequently ranked this question as considerable. One SWIS worker gave this part of the question both a moderate and significant response by indicating that there are two roles that of SWIS worker and that of Multicultural Worker; she ranked each role differently:

There's two parts to this. I'm seeing a Multicultural aspect: I'm seeing a Settlement aspect of this. So helping children adjust to school culture has a lot to do with the multicultural workers. Settlement workers we mostly, mostly work with the parents or the guardians and extended families. So I'd say that the first part would be three, and then the next part, providing parents with information would be five, so it's kind of 2-part for me here. (Josette, October, 2011)

For Josette the division of roles is not only clear, yet viewed quite differently—moderate versus significant. This expanded response explains why there are 14 responses to time spent on this outcome.

The last piece of this Ministry goal as indicated above is providing parents with information and resources on settlement. This part of the outcome requires a significant amount of time for SWIS workers. Depending on client needs the time spent can be very demanding. Based on responses it is clear that SWIS workers are providing services to clients that are not necessarily part of the Ministry mandate. This may in fact be an unintended consequence experienced by SWIS workers as opposed to a deliberate decision to extend services beyond the mandate. In these cases it was necessary for SWIS workers to provide these services to enable clients to begin the settlement process, which substantiates the taxonomy of readiness. As stated by Cathleen this is an area of concern:

I also volunteer outside of the school district at the community level, so then we can always try to fill the little gaps that we may not be able to achieve while we're here because it may not be under our mandate. (Cathleen, October, 2011)

This quote speaks directly to the fact that some of the day-to-day tasks that face SWIS workers would not be considered as part of their mandate, yet working with clients, especially with refugee families, there is a clear and immediate need to attend to rudimentary needs of these families. Although not articulated in direct response to this outcome, further interview responses reported the same phenomena. In fact, all 13 participants indicated in one way or another that the high needs of refugee families is an area of concern and one that demands a considerable amount of time.

General Findings of Outcome 1

Overall, this was the only outcome of the five where all 13 participants gave it a rating as a significantly important outcome, yet when asked about the level of implementation in the field one SWIS worker stated this outcome as moderately happening, five indicated that the implementation was considerable, and seven SWIS workers indicated that it was significant. Similarly one SWIS worker indicated that only a moderate amount of time was spent on this outcome while six SWIS workers stated considerable and seven suggested a significant amount of time being spent to reach this outcome. This outcome essentially has two parts—working with children and assisting parents. Although mutually beneficial, many SWIS workers had a difficult time or were reluctant to answer both parts of the question. There appears to be some hesitation by SWIS workers as to what their acceptable involvement with parents is, specifically in regard to dealing with schools. In response to the first outcome a clear division between working with parents and children was noted by some SWIS workers making it difficult for them to rate the level of implementation and time spent on that outcome. This demonstrates, I suggest, that SWIS workers, in this school district, view their role as distinct from multicultural workers but that the exact difference in the field is not always clear. Much of the time spent helping families is spent outside of the school environment. In this particular school district there is a clear distinction between the two roles. SWIS workers were very clear that their role is concerned in particular with the beginning stages of settlement into the schools and community.

Given the high level of significance ranked by all SWIS workers, it is clear that the fieldwork does not align with the level of importance. The frontline workers viewed this outcome as being implemented at a moderate to significant level and their time spent on this outcome ranged, again, from moderate to significant. Some SWIS workers

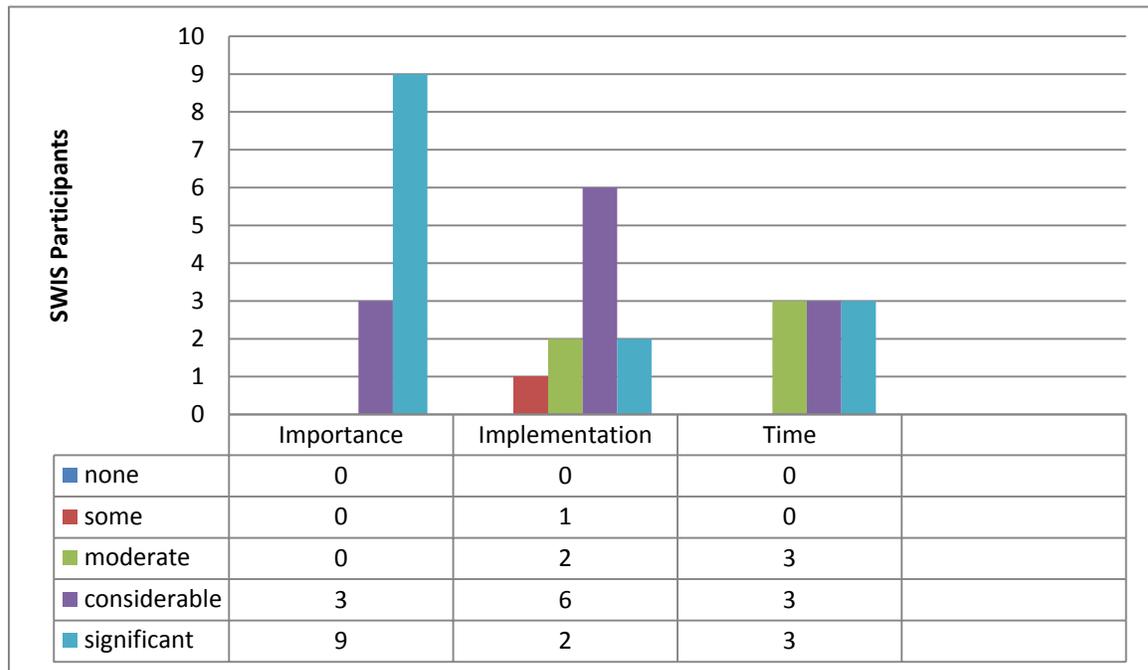
had a difficult time answering the implementation and time aspect of the question as they viewed this outcome as twofold: working with students and working with parents. They reported that they work with both students and parents, but noted that they spend more time working with parents than working directly with students in schools. One SWIS worker did not want to place a numeric value on the implementation question as it was felt that this was too hard to judge as there are so many variables.

This particular outcome addressed two specific goals, one for students the other for parents. Five SWIS workers, in response to this item, spoke directly to the fact that dealing with the parents and dealing with the students are two different things. This was also articulated by SWIS workers who felt that at the school level this mandate would fall under the multicultural workers' mandate; whereas, settling parents is very specific to their role. Based on the responses it is not a matter of overlap, but rather a collaborative approach to offering the most inclusive service based on the needs of the student and their families.

5.5.4. Second Ministry Outcome

Figure 5.3 represents the second of the five Ministry-intended outcomes for the SWIS program.

Figure 5.3. Increasing Parents' Understanding of Canadian Culture and School Systems



Importance of Outcome

Increasing parents' understanding of Canadian culture and school systems was viewed by nine SWIS workers as significantly important, while three ranked this outcome as considerably important, and one SWIS did not rank this outcome. Two SWIS workers intertwined the roles of SWIS workers and multicultural workers in this school district as noted by this comment:

The multicultural workers will be working on this as well, so because they are academic their role is more of an academic nature and this is where sometimes there is a grey area between us and them: Settlement workers and multicultural workers. (Colleen, October, 2011)

The so-called grey area between the two roles is not necessarily the case in all school districts providing the SWIS program, and in this program, it was clear that the working relationship between SWIS workers and multicultural workers is positive and collaborative. Comments around the role of schools and the relationship with parents decreased the rating from significant to considerable in terms of the importance of this objective. Some SWIS workers indicated that parents do not necessarily want to be

involved or understand the school system, as they feel that schools are entirely responsible for student education. Two SWIS workers noted:

School is expecting parents to get involved because they think the student will benefit from that, so it is really a learning process for parents as well. So I try to, by comparison, I have given them examples; I try to encourage them to get involved as much as they can. (Oliver, October, 2011)

It's considerably important, because some parents they think they came from the country when the children go to school the parents are not involved, so the teacher dealing with children at school and the parents only at home. (Tina, October, 2011)

All 13 SWIS workers understand the relevant role that parents play in student learning; however, the area that is challenging for some is educating the parents regarding their role and how the school system operates in their new country. This is particularly difficult working with some refugees that have no concept of schooling in their country of origin.

Implementation of Outcome

The implementation of this outcome was viewed as quite low; in fact one SWIS worker indicated that this is happening only some of the time in the field. Only two SWIS workers indicated the implementation as significant, and again one SWIS chose not to place a ranking. What emerged as barriers to implementation was the amount of time spent on other tasks, in particular around refugee preparedness, and challenges around understanding the Canadian school system. Sophia did not feel it was appropriate to weight the implementation as a ranking. She made a distinction between those who are arriving better equipped with, for example, prior background and experience with schools, to those for whom the culture shock is totally overwhelming:

I cannot (rank) because I have from, to you give you an idea about my clients you will have those who are like doctor with high education, and you will see illiterate. So you can imagine the result. (Sophia, October, 2011)

In the case of the latter, concerns around literacy, the implementation and the time spent on this outcome would be much greater; therefore, she did not want to be general in her response as each client's needs are so different.

Time Spent on Outcome by SWIS Workers in the Field

SWIS workers responded to this question as the time they spend in the field not on how long it takes for the system to respond to this outcome. The time required to meet this outcome in the field was reported as significant by three SWIS workers with another three spending what they felt was a considerable amount of time, and three indicating a moderate amount of time. For example Mary responded:

Which time doing that? That is part of the 70%, but it's not as high, we'll say that 40% of our time goes in to that; it's a lesser part of the case so it is very important, but since there are so many other issues we can not only focus on that. (Mary, October, 2011)

In this instance Mary had previously indicated that about 30% of her workload evolves around paperwork; therefore, this 40% is based on 70% of the overall day-to-day tasks. One SWIS worker indicated that she did not want to rank the time spent as it varies from client to client with some requiring tremendous support in the initial stages. Two SWIS workers answered this question by indicating percentage of time spent, and thus were not reflected in the data. There are many emergent needs for some families that require immediate attention; thus impacting the implementation and time spent on this goal, for example:

It depends, and sometimes when the families arrive here they focus more on the housing and how I can get the social insurance number, where I can go get from this doing things that sometimes parents ask us in the beginning but more we work with them then they trust us. That's when they come forward and share the issues, and as I say it really depends on each family and the level they are and right away facing some of their difficulties and cultural shock with the children and parenting things. (Cathleen, October, 2011)

As noted Cathleen found this outcome very important but there is not enough time to attend to increasing parents' understanding of schools and community.

General Findings of Outcome 2

Several SWIS workers indicated that parent views around the role of schools was a barrier in assisting them in understanding the school system—a direct mandate of this goal. The following encapsulates this concern:

I say the reasons are the parents most of the time don't understand how important this is—we do they don't—so I mean we spend a lot of time trying to explain. You know, they take it actually very casually and say well my kid is already in the school, so you know it's up to the teachers and you know, whoever, to do this. I don't have to get involved. (Douglas, October, 2011)

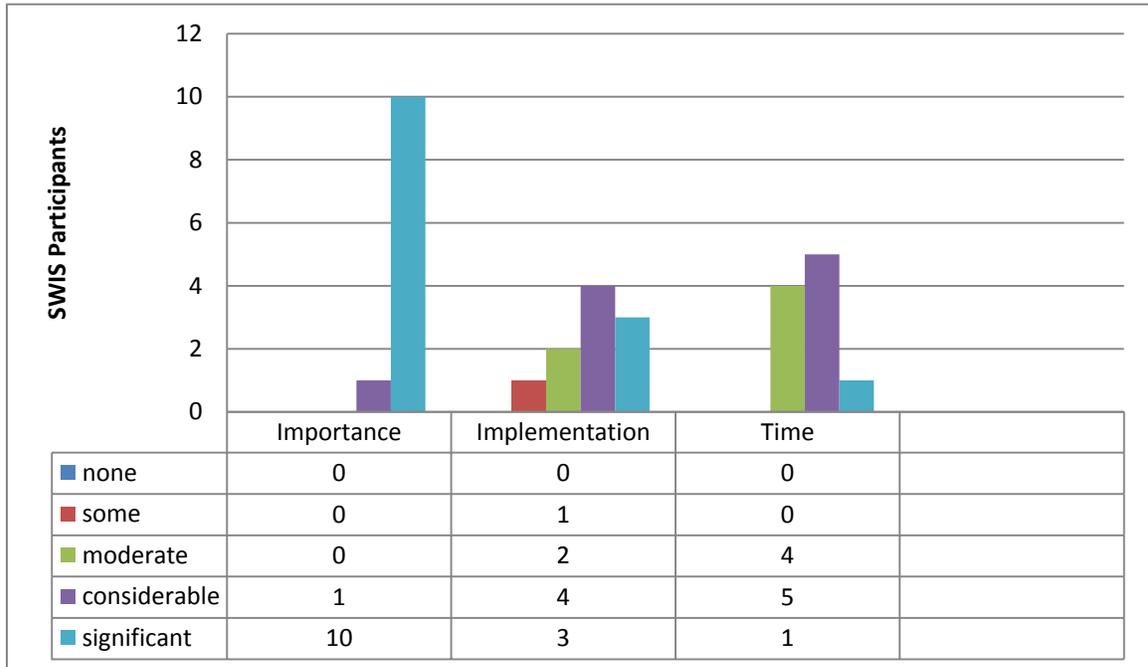
This concern was not only noted in response to the second Ministry outcome it was indeed a concern voiced in reference to the home/school relationship—a prevalent theme of this research—throughout the interviews. The lack of understanding of the connection between home and school was mentioned in all three areas of this outcome: importance, implementation, and time.

The difference in roles between the multicultural workers and the SWIS workers was mentioned several times as not being clear in reference to this outcome. It was noted that typically these two positions do collaborate to provide the best service to students and their families. Increasing parents' understanding of Canadian culture and school systems was noted as being at times difficult to implement as some parents do not understand the role they are expected to play in their child's education. For many they are from a background experience where the parents hand the child over to school and have minimal involvement as parents. This will be discussed further in the next chapter when demonstrating how the findings connect to the themes.

5.5.5. Third Ministry Outcome

Figure 5.4 represents the third of the five Ministry-intended outcomes for the SWIS program.

Figure 5.4. Increase Parent Involvement in School and Community



Importance of Outcome

Ten SWIS workers indicated that this outcome is significantly important, one indicated that it is considerably important, and two SWIS workers did not rank the outcome but provided a narrative. Responses around the question mostly addressed the issue of different perspectives of the role of parent/guardians in the student's education. Connecting to schools was once again noted as an area where background experiences and expectations of schools impeded the integration process. In terms of the difference between the perceived importance of this outcome and the actual implementation in the field one SWIS worker stated, "I would say significant. The reality is it's very slow for some families to get involved in school community, so the extent that I actually happens, I would say some" (Colleen, October, 2011). This comment encapsulates the sentiment expressed by several SWIS workers. It appears that the school reception can be pivotal in enabling SWIS workers to perform their role and for students to settle in to their new environment.

Implementation of Outcome

Three SWIS workers indicated that implementing this outcome was significant. Four viewed this as being considerably implemented, two rated it as moderate, and one SWIS worker ranked the outcome as being implemented only some of the time in the field and two did not provide a ranking. A major barrier to implementing parent involvement in school and community was stated several times as parent perceptions that the school is responsible for the child and parents are not involved directly. The following excerpt attests to this sentiment:

I know there is a little bit of different concepts in these families. The school is the school I send my kid to the school it's up to the school the way they do it and we need to convince we need to explain to them that system here works a little different and we need to have a little more of an insight in what's happening for example I will say go to school and this is their problem to deal with whatever. (Gerry, October, 2011)

Additionally, not being able to communicate in English was a pervasive barrier.

Time Spent on Outcome by SWIS Workers in the Field

Only one SWIS worker reported that a significant amount of time is spent in the field on this outcome. Most SWIS workers, five, reported a considerable amount of time, while four indicated a moderate amount of time and three did not rank the time spent achieving this outcome. Again the main barrier around enacting or spending time on this outcome was different attitudes around the role of schools and differing concepts of parental involvement. As well, as indicated in other responses to other outcomes, the role of multicultural workers in comparison to SWIS workers impacts the time spent by SWIS workers on achieving this outcome in this school district.

General Findings of Outcome 3

The Ministry outcome to increase parent involvement in school and community was not responded to, overall, as in-depth as the other outcomes. Six SWIS workers simply ranked the importance, implementation, and time spent and did not respond with narrative to support their ranking. All six of these SWIS workers work with some of the most traumatized and vulnerable groups. This factor was prevalent throughout the project; therefore, it was examined as a key finding under health as outlined earlier. For some SWIS workers the majority, if not entire, caseload is comprised of refugees. One

SWIS worker did not want to answer this question at all as she felt a certain redundancy to this question as her clients are by and large at the pre-settlement stage and do not have the basic tools or understanding to be involved in their child's education as noted below:

We were telling them the importance of parents to be involved with children and they were saying, well now we learned that it is important but usually if I cannot help my child because I don't know what he's reading I cannot read or tell anything or help him, so how can I be part of it. (Cathleen, October, 2011)

It is noteworthy that the SWIS worker with the least amount of experience working with refugees responded to this outcome by referencing nuances of culture concerned with hospitality:

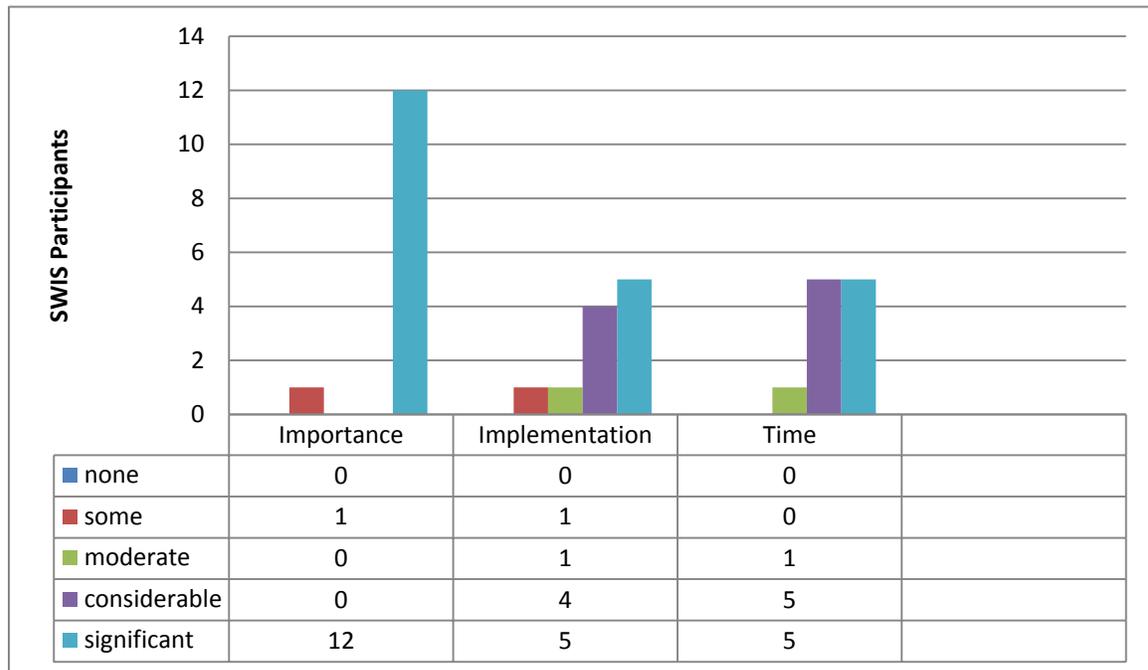
Western culture is more of the direct courtesy, respect and they will not really kind of overwhelm you with their warmth and that kind of thing. But a lot of the people coming from Asian culture, European or Hispanic culture you have to on top of them, you know, constantly show them your smile and asking them how you're doing, invite them over, but this is not Canadian culture. (Wanda, October, 2011)

This particular SWIS worker is expressing complex strategies for integration. For example when discussing the language barrier she indicates a willingness of the newcomer to practice speaking English with members of the community, which for her is an advanced stage of settlement. She further notes that the newcomers she is working with and describing here are far further along the settlement continuum than those who are arriving unprepared for the settlement process and just focussed on managing daily survival. As well, for this SWIS worker openness and friendliness were considered in response to this Ministry goal, again, likely not an articulated concern in reference to refugees and refugee preparedness.

5.5.6. Fourth Ministry Outcome

Figure 5.5 represents the fourth of the five Ministry-intended outcomes for the SWIS program.

Figure 5.5. Assess needs of Immigrant Families and Barriers to Successful Integration



Importance of Outcome

Twelve SWIS workers ranked this as significant which is the second strongest response to the five Ministry outcomes; only the first outcome received 13 ratings as significantly important. One SWIS worker commented that this outcome is very significant and another indicated very, very significant. One SWIS worker viewed this as important to the Ministry, but not to him, “I think that’s important to the Ministry; I don’t think it’s very important for me some, maybe I say two” (Douglas. October, 2011). Assessing needs of immigrant families and barriers to successful integration is an ongoing aspect of the SWIS workers’ role as indicated by this comment, “Significant, because if I am not assessing their needs I cannot help them” (Sophia. October, 2011).

Implementation of Outcome

Although 12 indicated the significance of this outcome only five stated that it is significant in terms of implementation in the field. Four SWIS workers felt it was implemented at a considerable level and one gave a moderate response. For one SWIS worker this outcome is being implemented in the field only some of the time. Two SWIS

workers did not respond to this part of the question with one SWIS worker indicating that it depends on the situation. Based on the responses it appears that SWIS workers did not easily articulate the level of implementation in their role. It may be that disaggregating how much is occurring may be difficult as essentially every encounter SWIS workers have with clients would involve a level of assessing needs and determining barriers preventing successful settlement.

Time Spent on Outcome by SWIS Workers in the Field

Their needs are great, “Every day we deal with the parents we discover more and more their needs” (Cathleen, October, 2011).

It is very hard for us, so we try to adjust the times—high priority stuff because some of the communities they are very much high priority. So we keep focused on those high priority families, and we welcome them, and we spend most of the time. (Ken, October, 2011)

One SWIS indicated that in terms of time, this outcome takes years, “time it can be 1 year, it can be 3 years, sometimes even more” (Tina, October, 2011). This response indicates a mindfulness of the end goal for the newcomer and not in terms of her time in the field on a day-to-day basis.

General Findings of Outcome 4

Assessing family needs is a large part of their role as indicated by the 12 SWIS workers who reported the importance of this objective as significant. Again, as with other Ministry outcomes the level of implementation and the time spent on the outcome are far apart. An important component that speaks to this is the apparent lack of services particularly for refugees. As directly stated by Jennifer, “the existing programs are not quite enough for government assisted refugees, so I would say number 2” (Jennifer, October, 2011). This response is represented on the graph as the lower ranking stating the implementation occurs only some of the time. The needs of some of the newcomers are so great and there seems to be an endless need for services:

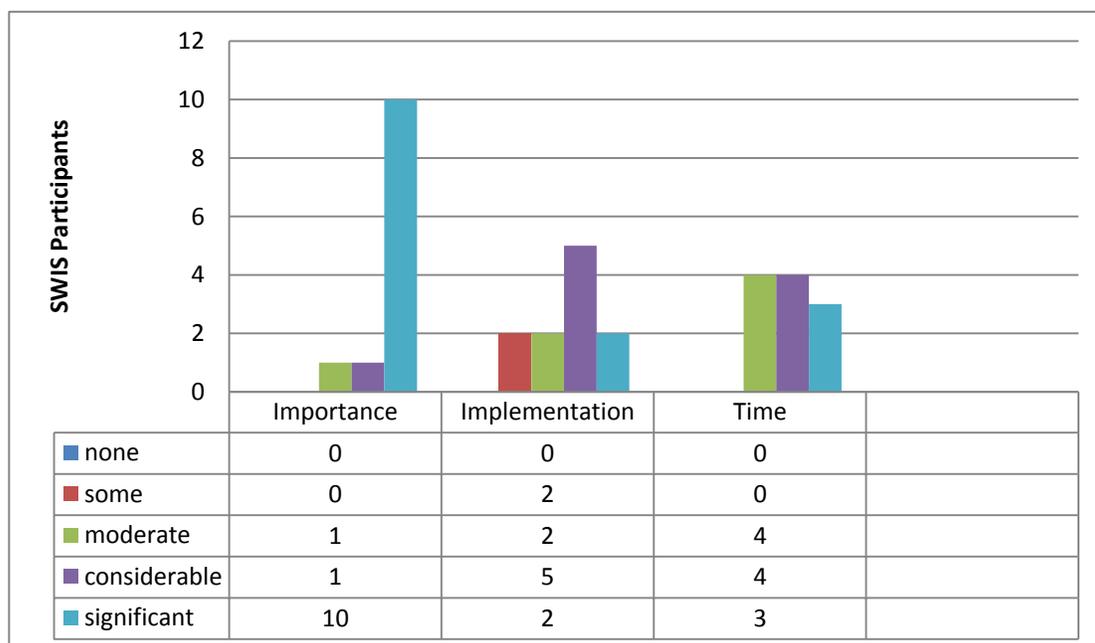
When we are working with new families, especially refugees, we do every meeting to assess when I’m saying assess it’s not assessment that we need to take pen and paper, so we need to be more aware, listen more, so I think it’s very important. (Cathleen, October, 2011)

With this great need it is interesting that two SWIS workers rated the time spent on this outcome as 20% of their time. This response may be indicative of the client caseload of each SWIS worker. In this study there were SWIS workers who work entirely with refugee families and some who had limited experience with refugee families. For example, one of these respondents has less experience working with refugees than the other respondents and did indicate in the response that assessing needs was done at the beginning of the program. This indicates that mainstream immigrants, who this particular SWIS worker mostly works with, likely do not have the same ongoing needs as presented by refugees and are typically assessed and directed to services at the outset of the program and are able to maintain and connect to the appropriate services more independently. Whereas those whose needs are so great and continually shifting makes the outcome of assessing needs an ongoing and time-consuming mandate. This is certainly the case with many of the refugee families who are arriving at the pre-settlement stage of the continuum.

5.5.7. Fifth Ministry Outcome

The following Figure 5.6 represents the fifth Ministry-intended outcome for the SWIS program.

Figure 5.6. Increase Access to Programs and Services and Work to Improve the Effectiveness of those Programs



Importance of Outcome

Ten SWIS workers viewed this as significant, one considerable and one moderate. One SWIS worker did not provide a ranking but answered the question with a narrative of her experience. Her narrative indicated the vast barriers for her clients arriving as refugees whereby they are so traumatized they are not ready to access services in the community. In particular she mentioned those for whom most of their life experience has been in a refugee camp. As noted by Cathleen:

If you stay at the camp with, if you come to the camp let's say age 10 and you stay at the camp maybe 10 years or 15 years you may not even have an opportunity to learn any of the skills that can be marketable here, and it's like you're growing up more than a child, so that equation myself and say if someone were to a person maybe at age 10 never had an, but even age 16 or 20 when you come out 5 years 6 years [from refugee camps] from the child you may need programs that will help you. (Cathleen, October, 2011)

Implementation of Outcome

Only two SWIS workers viewed this outcome as being significantly implemented in the field. Some SWIS workers noted that there are not enough services for some refugee families and that this school district has responded by creating additional programs to meet the pre-settlement needs of their students and their families. For example:

We try to different programs to introduce to them, it is very, very important actually, just us as a SWIS team we cannot do everything. There is so many agencies, there are community agencies, they are running out there so we have to introduce in some cases which there are not any programs. (Oliver, October, 2011)

What Oliver is expressing here is that if SWIS workers cannot find appropriate services in the community then they use their internal resources to assist in meeting the many challenging needs of their clients. Additionally, it was noted that community agencies at times do not have someone who speaks the same language as the client, and in some cases have been referred back to this SWIS program for assistance. There appears, at times, to be a level of incoherence between outside agencies and the SWIS program as articulated by Wanda:

Well, they just refer by refer from this agency refer to another agency, and by the last one they should stop the puck, right? But it was like okay, I'll tell you one person who will definitely going to help you, and this person is called Wanda. (Wanda, October, 2011)

Time Spent on Outcome by SWIS Workers in the Field

Three SWIS workers indicated that a significant amount of time is spent on achieving this outcome, whereas four ranked it as considerable and four viewed the time spent as moderate, and two SWIS workers did not provide a ranking. Based on the responses a great deal of SWIS worker time is allocated to the refugee preparedness stage where many community resources are either not accessible or not appropriate.

General Findings of Outcome 5

In general SWIS workers appear to be connecting their clients with the required services, yet the implementation of this outcome was reported as considerable at the highest rating. With five SWIS workers indicating that this is happening in the field at a considerable level and only one SWIS worker indicating that this is implemented at a significant level, this outcome needs consideration. This particular outcome was implied by the responses of the earlier interview question in which all SWIS workers were asked what they perceived as the Ministry mandate. Many mentioned outreach and connecting clients to external services; however, the amount that this is happening and the time spent on this outcome does not fully service this critical objective. There appears to be a gap in the services that are available to some newcomers, particularly refugees. Bearing in mind that this initial stage of the interview did not focus the questions specifically in reference to the refugee population, it is noteworthy that several SWIS workers responded that community agencies were not providing services for refugees and those functioning at the refugee preparedness stage of integration. According to Jennifer, "The existing programs are not quite enough for government assisted refugees, so I would say number 2" (Jennifer, October, 2011). As a result of this apparent gap in service four SWIS workers conveyed that within this particular school district's SWIS program they have created and implemented complementary programs to support this vulnerable population.

The services vary for newcomers. It is noteworthy to include that one SWIS worker responded with a sense of frustration around referrals. In this case it was

indicated that SWIS workers refer clients to an external agency which often refers to another agency or in the case cited specifically the agency referred to the client back to the original SWIS worker who had made the original referral. This was reported as not being a common occurrence, yet, I believe it speaks to an area that needs to become a focus of settlement within the SWIS program. There is, as indicated by this research, a strong need for services that assists refugee preparedness, as profoundly stated by Cathleen:

Those people who are coming from a refugee camp who lived maybe all their life ever since youth or born there and grow up there they will need similar programs or even more to teach, to be patient, and to show that there is other alternative, other, you know, they can dream. (Cathleen, October, 2011)

Answers to the outcomes revealed a varied response between participants. This outcome was generally rated as being significantly important by SWIS workers (nine responses), yet the implementation was ranked as significant by only one. Connecting clients with services is a large part of the role of SWIS workers. Noteworthy is that later in the interview SWIS workers indicated that their greatest measure of success in their view is connecting clients to services.

5.5.8. Summary of Responses to Intended Ministry Outcomes

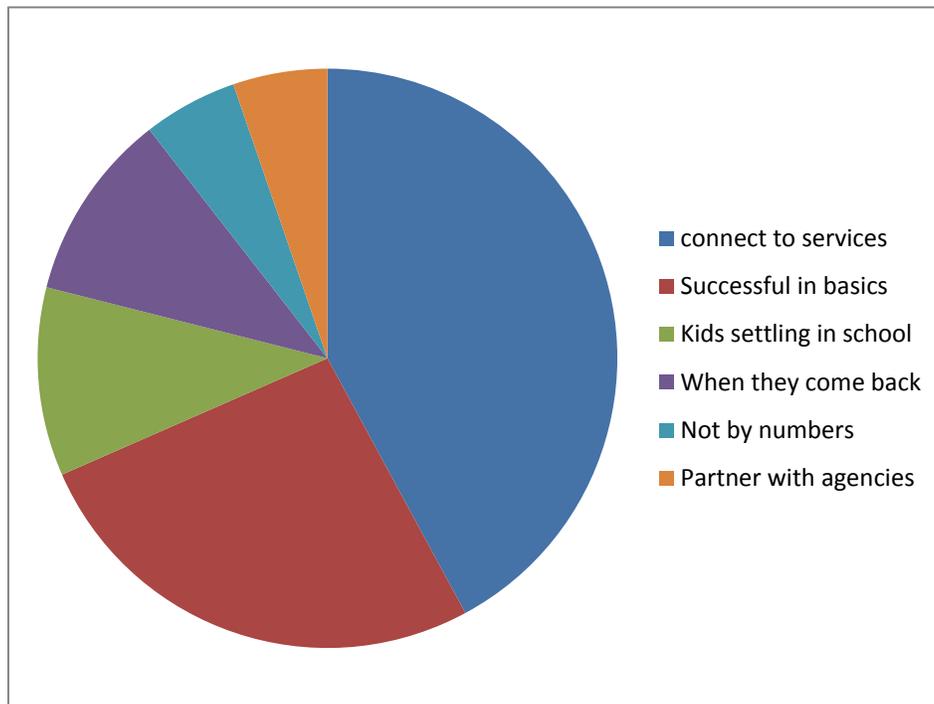
The responses to all five Ministry outcomes generally displayed gaps between the importance of the outcome and the level of implementation and time spent on the outcomes. The outcomes were not responded to by 100% of SWIS workers indicating a reluctance to measure certain aspects of their role in particular those related to implementation and time spent reaching that goal. Additionally, those two aspects, implementation and time, received the lowest ratings by some SWIS workers. This will be expanded upon in the the next chapter. To conclude the section Program Outcomes and Expectations the following question was posed, “How has your experience enabled you to reach these outcomes?” SWIS workers answered this in a variety of different ways. For some it was a matter of indicating that they are pleased to connect their clients with services, while others responded by outlining some of their duties. By and large, although answered in different ways, all SWIS workers indicated that their experience has enabled them to meet these outcomes. This serves as a starting point to understanding the complexity of the SWIS workers’ role and how it is enacted when

working with refugee clients. This section provides foundational information to better understand the next two sections, which were developed to seek the stories from the field to understand the frontline experience of SWIS workers. It is important to understand how SWIS workers view their role, what level of impact they feel they have, and how this program is different for the refugee population. The last of the questions in this section, “How is settlement different for refugees?” served to substantiate whether or not there is a difference. In this case all 13 responses indicated differences, thus adding reliability to the study. As the question was unequivocally asking if the settlement experience was different for refugees, and a 100% positive response, this validated the direction of this research to narrow in on this population. The next section of the interview highlights successes and challenges met along the way.

5.5.9. Successes and Challenges Met Along the Way

The first question in this section, “How do you measure success in your role?” elucidates how SWIS workers view their role and what constitutes success in their opinion. This question was a direct result of the pilot process outside of this school district and proved to be a useful question to frame the inside understanding of the role of SWIS workers and how they feel about the work they do. As this section is concerned with success and challenges it was important to begin with the SWIS workers’ voice. For the majority of SWIS workers they responded with examples of families that they have had a positive impact on and have assisted in their settlement process. There was a great deal of personal satisfaction and pride by all in response to this question. Six consistent responses emerged and are expressed in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7. Interview Question 6: “How do you measure success in your role?”



As indicated by the pie chart the predominant theme was connecting clients to services. This response is particularly compelling due to earlier responses by SWIS workers when asked to rank the Ministry outcome regarding increasing access to programs and services and work to improve the effectiveness of those programs that did not align with this chart. Clearly, based on Figure 5.7, connecting to services is viewed as critical in the success of their role. Indeed eight SWIS workers responded directly that their view of success in the role was based on connecting clients with the appropriate services. They were not asked to expand upon nor report specific services in their responses; however, some were noted. Services in general are those that exist both within the school district as well as outside agencies. Settling families with the basics was definitely seen as a strong measure of success in their role. Helping clients with their basic needs was the second highest indicator of success and complements the highest indicator of connecting clients with services. These two are connected in many ways as for most SWIS workers settling in the basics required some level of access to services. This indicates an even higher response in terms of connecting to services. This general sentiment around connecting to services referred to all families, but the need to assist and connect services for refugees certainly emerged as an indicator of success when

assisting those hard-to-reach or multi-barriered families. The settlement of children in schools was also viewed as a measure of success. In this instance the connection between a positive settlement experience lead to a more successful integration of students at the school level. SWIS workers commented that sometimes families come back after extended absences from the program. This was a measure of success in that SWIS workers felt their services had a positive impact with families during the beginning stages and returning clients substantiated their role. Retention of clients was not measured, but there were indicators that families leave perhaps before they have fully utilized the program. SWIS workers did not measure their success by numbers. Partnering with agencies was viewed as both a challenge and success. When they were able to formalize a partnership with an outside agency they felt this to be an accomplishment. Jennifer and Mary made comments in this regard, "I find it rewarding when the families get access to what they need, and even though some of the resources don't fulfill all of their needs, I really think that that is success" (Jennifer, October, 2011) and, "It's not by numbers. It's by how I see families being successful. It's when in the first year of supporting them, they have found a way to discover by themselves how they system work. At least they get access to what they need" (Mary, October, 2011).

5.5.10. Success and Challenges Experienced when Working with Schools

Two interview questions were concerned with successes and challenges faced through interactions with schools. Most participants reported more successes than challenges. The main challenges communicated revolved around misunderstandings (cultural) and miscommunications (language and culture). Several participants reported more challenges at the outset of the program, but were pleased to note that in most instances these challenges no longer exist or are minimal. Some initial challenges were experienced around the reception of SWIS workers in schools. Some SWIS workers commented on the importance of support staff, who are often viewed as the first impression of a school, in either welcoming SWIS workers openly or in a more closed manner. Over time it appears that as the SWIS program became part of the school culture the successes far outweighed the challenges. This may be a natural evolution as schools become more accustomed to the fact that SWIS workers are part of the school district and offer a support role that is beneficial to students and their families.

It was noted by all SWIS participants that the challenges were greater for the refugee students and their families than for the mainstream newcomers. Experiences that were reported during the interviews included issues around language barriers, behavior expectations, concepts of schooling, and general misunderstandings based around cultural differences and school processes as barriers to adjusting to school culture. Challenges facing refugees, as reported by SWIS workers, for the most part fell under the four categories emphasized throughout this paper: refugee preparedness, health, home/school relationship, and identity. Some challenges noted were also framed around the notion of schools being very busy places, in particular secondary schools, and some of the challenges were simply around time and resources. For example:

Challenges with school, now the biggest challenge is because it is a big number of student coming to [this school district], for example, secondary school student they can't start school until they see the counsellor and they do the schedule because they need a schedule to go to their course, and sometimes they have to wait one week, two weeks. (Tina, October, 2011)

An additional challenge was the lack of understanding by school staff and administration of the impact of student cultural backgrounds. In particular, refugees may be arriving oftentimes traumatized and/or in poor health, in addition to core educational deficits, for example:

Some teachers or principals saying... they're here in Canada they should have, they should leave everything—their problems back there. And I tell them you can't just do that. You can't just shed your former problems if your parents were killed or your sisters were killed you can't just come to Canada and say it's okay now. (Douglas, October, 2011)

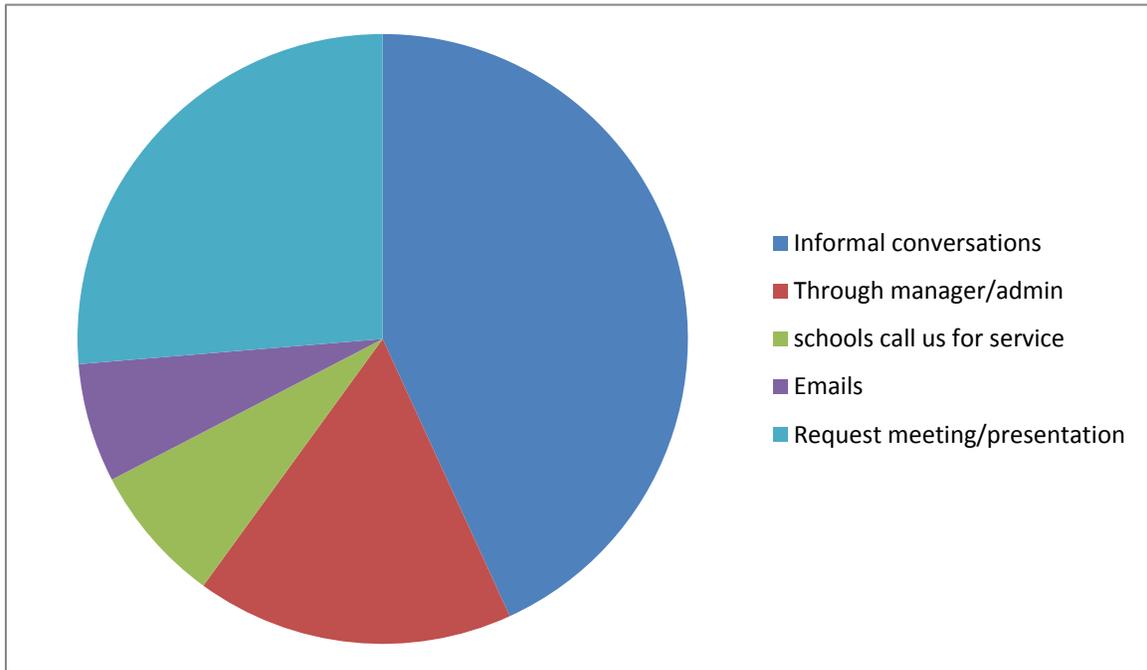
It was indicated that some schools still did not welcome SWIS workers and felt that this service was not important. However, as noted earlier, this was cited as more of a challenge during the initial stages of the program and over time, for the most part, SWIS workers feel that they are active members in their school communities as noted:

It's a job that takes a lot of heart, and you can't do it otherwise. First of all the welcome, how welcoming the administration is of us, the secretaries, who are their first barrier trying to get into the school. So the fact that they even light up when they see us and say hello and are even nice to us. That has been a lot of success. (Josette, October, 2011)

Overall in this section of the interview it was clear that there were many successes experienced by SWIS workers in their work with schools. One of the main areas that they felt they were impactful was in their role as cultural mediator. Often it was indicated that there are different cultural impressions around education, in particular the role of parents. In these situations SWIS workers were able to provide that information to the school as well as explain to their clients how schools function in their new culture. Success stories were very student based. Not one SWIS worker responded by using academic achievement as a measure of success. Success was articulated in terms of student's attitude and adjustment to the new school culture. This is worthwhile noting given the low starting point for refugee students entering the school system where academic achievement could be viewed as more of a long-term goal once the student has adjusted to the new environment.

The next question—How do schools communicate success to you?—was fairly straightforward and was included to provide a better understanding of the communication between schools and SWIS workers. This question was included in the interview to specifically ascertain if SWIS workers were indeed receiving regular feedback on the success of their role in schools. This is important to understand as success is not easily measured and often not articulated, and as this is a relatively new program it is important to consider success and how that is articulated in the field. Connecting this question back to the earlier question, “How do you measure success in your role” it is useful to recall that all SWIS workers responded to this earlier question with responses of a descriptive manner rather than a quantitative approach. In fact, one SWIS worker clearly indicated in response to that question that success, in her view, was not measured by numbers of services connected to newcomers or how many families she served for that reporting period. The most prominent response to the question of how do schools communicate success was through informal conversations. This response indicates an ease of dialogue between schools and SWIS workers. The response with the lowest indicator is schools requesting meetings or presentations further substantiating the more informal approach as reported by SWIS workers. The following figure expresses the way in which SWIS workers viewed their method for communication of the successes they were experiencing in schools.

**Figure 5.8. Interview Question 9:
How Do Schools Communicate Success to You?**



This question concludes the second part of the interview that looked at Successes and Challenges Met along the Way. As the data presented indicates there are many successes occurring within the SWIS program. The biggest challenges, it seems, are around access to resources, particularly for refugees, and communication barriers based on cultural misunderstanding. With cultural understanding being so key to student and family success in settlement it is clear that the SWIS program does have a positive and progressive impact on newcomer families. The next section provides the first-hand account of the SWIS workers' experience working with refugee families and demonstrates how these narratives culminated in four key themes that emerged as barriers to the settlement process for refugees.

5.6. Refugee Family Experience

The final section of the interview delved directly into SWIS workers' experience working with refugee students and their families. Table 5.31 provides evidence supporting how the program is working, is not working, and what made the difference

when the program was successful or could have made the situation more successful. This data is summarized within the framework of the four themes. The matrix provides an exemplary quote expressed by SWIS workers when working with refugees. This table encapsulates the essence of the refugee experience. It was during this section of the interview that the most detailed accounts of refugee successes and challenges were portrayed. What follows next, and completes the presentation of the interview responses, are the recommendations from SWIS workers.

Table 5.31. Matrix Representing SWIS Workers' Experience Working with Refugees

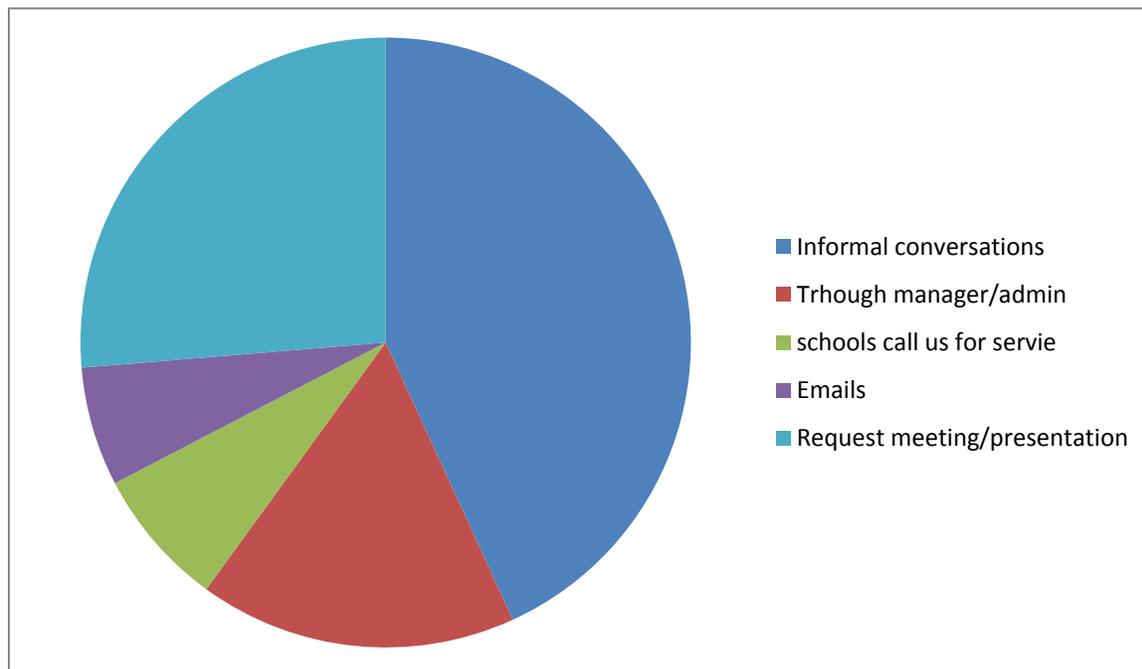
Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
Is there a refugee family success story you can tell me?			
Since they came here they help their kids, you know, educations are very much very zero, very starting levels, very zero; they never go to school they have no formal school in the refugee camp.	Refugees who come with mentally challenged kids who see their kid is going to school instead of just being shunned.	It made the difference the school where the kids were I know the principal and the secretaries took special interest in this family so they got a lot of support at school that was the first thing.	Refugees who come with mentally challenged kids who see their kid is going to school instead of just being shunned.
What made the difference in this family's case?			
Why are they refugees in the first place...they're escaping death and destruction and prosecution.	They are mentally and physically healthy and ready to live here.	il is she was working pretty hard in school (daughter) so she work hard in the school and at home and she do her homework regularly.	We want to make this as our home and we want to model this for our kids, this is how we overcome together as a family.
Can you relay a story where you felt the program was not meeting the needs of a refugee family? What caused this situation to be unsuccessful?			
They didn't know how to use stove for example. And they don't know how to use kitchen appliances and all that.	The father is here, the son is there, mom is still suffering in here, is crying every day, every day, every day emotional.	This little daughter who has the disability, the learning disability, she's doing really well with her SEAs, she's doing really well in the BASES program.	The father is here, the son is there, mom is still suffering in here, is crying every day, every day, every day emotional.

Refugee Preparedness	Health	Home/school relationship	Identity
What could have made their situation more successful?			
So they're coming from a background of with not the conveniences they're faced with her when they arrive, and simple demonstrations would help.	When families can try to forget all these things and happy with what they have and not thinking about the back home and which are very sad story.	We take them to the our school psychologist.	I felt his desperate for the feeling that he is useful.

5.7. Participant Recommendations

The final question of the interview asked the question, "If you were to recommend changes to the program, what might they be?" The recommendations from the field are all recommendations that support the notion of refugee preparedness. Responses to the question were not prompted by the interviewer to individuals or shared within the group, yet commonalities were found in the total responses. Figure 5.9 and its supporting comments expresses these recommendations.

Figure 5.9. Recommendations from SWIS Workers



5.7.1. Recommendation: Increased Community Partnerships and Outreach Services

As indicated in the above visual representation increased community partnerships and outreach services was the most common and consistent recommendation from SWIS workers. In response to a question prompting recommendations from the field, 6 of 13 SWIS workers highlighted a need for more interagency support and more outreach resources available in the community. In this instance SWIS workers see a need for more services, particularly those servicing the needs of the refugee population and others at the very preliminary stages of settlement. As noted by Cathleen, “we never talk about it, but I said inside the difficulties of things they went through that they are still dealing with personally without getting any help, so I wish we were able to have more support” (Cathleen, October, 2011). This recommendation demonstrates a strong desire on behalf of SWIS workers to connect to community resources, yet a reminder is in order that the findings in response to the Ministry mandate to connect families to services SWIS workers indicated that the implementation in the field did not match the desired outcome.

5.7.2. Recommendation for Counselling Services

One of the services stated as a recommendation was counselling. Four SWIS workers made counselling, or a need for mental health care, as a recommendation. In addition, it was noted on several occasions that the outside agencies do not always have the language support or ability to translate often resulting in the client returning and seeking that resource through SWIS workers. While a need for counselling services may not have been the most recommended element that SWIS workers identified as necessary, there were pervasive indicators throughout the entire interview process beyond this one question that highlight this need as significant. Enough comments were made in this area indirectly that it prompted one of the major themes of this research project: Health. For the most part, the stories shared indicated that mental health issues outweigh the physical health issues.

5.7.3. Recommendation: Need for Daycare Services

The need for daycare services was noted by several SWIS workers as a barrier for many of the families as they attempt to settle into their host society. Often the

families do not have extended family to rely upon or the financial ability to pay for their child's daycare. This was noted mostly as a concern for mothers not fathers. In particular it was noted that lack of daycare is often the reason why mothers do not attend English classes. Sophia was one of the SWIS workers who noted this: "we need child minding, so hopefully next time they will consider this" (Sophia, October, 2011). Based on the responses some SWIS workers feel that up-front funding for child-minding services could assist parents in attending English classes and thus ultimately settling into their new community quicker and easier than left to their own devices. In particular, many refugee families do not have the income or family support at home to enable them to find childcare while they attend language classes or other supporting services.

5.7.4. Recommendation to Have Full-Year Access to SWIS Program

With this particular recommendation it is important to note that those recommending it did not necessarily prefer a 12-month position for themselves. In fact one noted, "You have a life, I have young kids that's why the 10 months works". This, I feel, is crucial to note as this recommendation comes from a framework of providing the best service possible to newcomer families, who for many, summer break is arbitrary and disruptive to the settlement process. It was also noted that the needs of the clients don't go away over the summer months, and therefore upon re-engagement with the program in September there may be a backlog of requests presented to SWIS workers. Such comments as highlighted below articulate this:

During that 2 months a lot happened and nobody was there to take care of those, to organize them, then we try to catch up and in some cases it's not very easy and some of them even it is a lost opportunity, we cannot catch it up even. This is problematic as September and October are busy start-up months for schools. (Oliver, October, 2011)

5.7.5. Recommendation for More Funding

It is important to note that this comment was typically prefaced by disclaimer statements reflecting the SWIS worker's knowledge that increased funding is not always available. This was not necessarily a wish list of sorts or plea, but simply a statement attesting to the fact that if there is more funding then more services can be provided. In particular working with refugee families the needs are great and this group, particularly those at the early stage, would benefit from programs that support their urgent needs.

5.7.6. Recommendations Supporting Key Findings

The remainder of recommendations support the need for increased attention in the four key areas identified throughout this research and will be presented under the theme headings.

Refugee Preparedness

It was recommended that SWIS workers have access to home visits. SWIS workers are limited in their mandate and not permitted to conduct home visits. This recommendation falls again under the vein of addressing the needs of those at the early stage of settlement as home visits were not cited as necessary for day-to-day occurrences or interactions, but rather to start from the foundation of orienting new refugees to the basic layout and operations of their new environment. For many, using household appliances to perform tasks is a brand new concept and experience. An example cited was the lack of understanding around basic plumbing and running water. In this instance the family flooded their entire apartment as a result of not understanding how to turn water off. Other examples mentioned included those related to appliances as being a new experience for refugee families: dishwashers, fridges, and washer and dryers, as noted:

The program says that we cannot do home visits, but with government assisted refugees I feel that that is not working because when they first arrive here they didn't know, they have to start from scratch, they didn't know how to use stove for example. I did have a family whose apartment was flooded because he didn't know how to use the sink and yeah, that become problematic. (Jennifer, October, 2011)

As such, SWIS workers noted that home visits could assist in settling families into their homes, and in some cases prevent accidents or disasters from occurring. This may appear to not be important to the overall success of the program; however, if basic daily survival needs of a family are met chances for overall adjustment for the family increases.

Language and job training for parents surfaced as a recommendation. Lack of employment is a pervasive challenge amongst not only newcomers in general, but certainly refugees in particular. A successful program currently operational in this school district is a program that integrates both language learning and work experience training

for late-arriving immigrant youth. Many of the SWIS workers interviewed cited this program as successful, but further stated a recommendation to replicate this type of program to reach the adult/parent community of the families served. As well, language skills are key to parental success in obtaining employment, communicating with schools, and all other interactions in the host society. For some of the refugees eligibility for funded language programs may not be accessible to them. It was recommended by SWIS workers that more language training programs be available. Another recommendation supporting the need for services to help prepare for settlement for clients is the ability to fill out forms. For some refugees signing their own signature is not possible. This comment about forms arose in part out of frustration as well as from concerns around efficiencies or perceived inefficiencies. This response by Jennifer clearly outlines the frustrations experienced in this regard:

A lot of resources that we refer our clients to we need to fill out forms and our mandate says that we are not supposed to fill out forms, so we have to refer them to other communities and that takes away a lot of our time because instead of us filling the form out we have to take them to other places, it just doubles up our time. (Jennifer, October, 2011)

Health

As indicated in the pie graph, the need for counselling was a very strong recommendation. Mental health issues are a legitimate concern for the refugee population. In addition to mental health issues, it was also noted that refugee claimants would benefit from better access to full medical services. There are many limitations for refugee claimants until they receive confirmation on their status in Canada. This uncertainty and anticipation further exacerbates their mental health concerns by adding further stress to their situation. Access to health services is a particular challenge for refugee claimants who have limited access to services.

Home/School Relationship

This recommendation indicates a desire for a more holistic approach at the schools or central program facility. SWIS workers may have clients and families spread in many different parts of this school district. I have included this recommendation, although slightly impractical given the generally limited space in schools and the unlikely possibility of providing each school with the necessary SWIS worker support within their

school, however, this sentiment does attest to the feelings of being pulled in many directions expressed by many of the SWIS workers. The success of one particular extra-curricular program was noted by several SWIS workers as having a positive impact on both refugee kids and their parents. The SWIS workers cited an after-school soccer program that involved refugee youth. Aside from sport, it was noted that the program encouraged and modeled teamwork and social and cultural skill development. On the sidelines it was positively noted that the parents, in particular mothers, had an opportunity to meet and socialize with other parents further building support networks.

Identity

There was a recommendation for more input from target groups, refugees, when planning workshops. This recommendation surfaced in some of the responses. The recommendation around this is based on a concern that sometimes programs or workshops are not relevant to refugee needs. For example Douglas indicated an example of a workshop that did not meet the needs of the clients,

If they come and talk ICBC the parents have no intention of driving a car, why would they need someone from ICBC to speak to them or nature or, I think it's easy to just say: what things would you like to hear? (Douglas, October, 2011)

This citation supports the theme of identity as an example of a situation that would not be conducive to a positive self-identity. For the newcomers in this group the concept of driving is not in their immediate range of possibilities. This may, in fact, result in them feeling that they are immediately inferior citizens of their new country.

The final question of the interview was intentionally open-ended. It offered an opportunity for candid expression of program recommendations from the field. Overall the settlement workers were satisfied with how the program has been working in this particular school district. All recommendations from the field were based on the day-to-day experiences of SWIS workers. The culture of this particular program is supportive and open. Throughout the entire interview process there was never a sense of criticism or complaint around their role. There was not one recommendation that did not fit within the possibility for future growth in this program.

5.8. Conclusion

The 13 interviews conducted resulted in a substantial amount of information on the experiences of SWIS workers in this school district. This data resulted, as outlined in this chapter, in two key findings: three key areas that are barriers to the settlement process and notion of refugee preparedness. Despite the barriers facing newcomers in these domains the SWIS program is successful in its mandate. There may be a level of incongruence between the Ministry-intended outcomes and the reality in the field, but this, I believe, is an unintended consequence and has identified an area where the program could be expanded upon and refined. This next section, the final chapter, will conclude with discussion around all aspects of this research to embed the research in its historical, conceptual, and data-based framework concluding with recommendations for program refinement and further research in the field.

Chapter 6.

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion, conclusions, and recommendations based on the findings by first articulating the concept of pre-settlement as a result of the findings. It is necessary to begin this section with this explanation, as the concept of pre-settlement will be examined in subsequent discussion, conclusions, and recommendations in this chapter. Discussion will then move to the examination of the results of the data in terms of the original research questions. As the five Ministry-intended outcomes directly addressed one of the research sub-questions and responses to these questions supported all key findings each Ministry outcome will be discussed in sequence. The chapter will conclude with recommendations based on this study and voices from the field.

The findings of this research conclude that there is indeed an area below the taxonomy of integration presented in earlier chapters that needs to be seriously considered when working with refugees at the pre-settlement phase. This taxonomy will be expanded upon and presented as a major recommendation in the conceptualization and implementation of the SWIS program. Within the 1-year mandate it is the intent that SWIS workers get families to a level of independence whereby they have autonomy in their individual lives. Based on this research the 1-year mandate is not appropriate for refugees arriving at the pre-settlement stage.

6.2. Key Findings

6.2.1. Connection to Past Research and Historical Practices

It is not surprising that the SWIS program exists in Canada. There is a long history of immigration to Canada and immigration continues to be an important piece of the Canadian fabric. As the first nation with an official *Multicultural Act* and currently a refugee-receiving country a program such as SWIS attests to Canada's commitment to improving immigration reception. With an historical practice and ongoing assessment of immigration reception and retention the SWIS program has evolved out of a national concerted effort to improve the integration of immigrants. As discussed earlier, much attention is now placed on the role of the host nation in the reception process. As well, as outlined earlier by Burnaby (1991), there is a current thrust to elevating integration and views on settlement to a level akin to the general knowledge and concern around environmentalism demonstrated in Canada. Finally, returning to Howard Adelman's (1991) notion of the litmus test, it is critical that, as we continue to receive refugees, we devote attention to education and resources around refugee settlement. With this in mind, there is a strong recommendation that the SWIS program not only remain a welcoming resource in Canada, but that the current program mandate be expanded.

6.2.2. New Research Findings: Barriers to Settlement: Three Key Themes and Pre-settlement

What follows is the introduction and discussion of the pre-settlement stage followed by the three themes presented in Chapter 5 and how they relate to the taxonomy of settlement to integration. The themes are discussed separately, yet it is important to note that there is much overlap between themes. For example, health can be a major barrier to successful settlement and may also be connected to pre-settlement, identity, and home/school relationship. In particular many examples were cited where mental health was a concern, which would definitely impact one's ability to move from the pre-settlement stage and could quite likely impact a healthy self-identity and home/school relationship. These themes are intertwined, but by discussing them individually a clearer picture of the pervasiveness of these barriers may be presented as critical to understanding the key findings as a whole.

6.2.3. Pre-settlement

This research has resulted in the articulation of a new concept of “pre-settlement”, based on the findings in this particular school district. Pre-settlement expresses the starting point on the continuum from settlement to integration whereby many refugees are not able to participate fully in the settlement process due to overwhelming difficulties in prior experiences and dispositions. Immigrants may experience pre-settlement issues upon arrival in the host country (not pre-arrival in the country of origin). It is necessary to articulate this difference as the ‘pre’ could be interpreted to relate to a stage that occurs prior to arrival in the host country. In this research the concept of pre-settlement is used to articulate the notion that basic settlement is not immediately accessible to some vulnerable refugees and that additional targeted support is required to equip refugees with the understanding of concepts and skills required to successfully settle into the new community. During the pre-settlement stage services are required to assist in refugees becoming settlement ready. These two stages, while differentiated here for discussion and presented as a taxonomy, are effectively intertwined in the same beginning stage of the settlement-to-integration process.

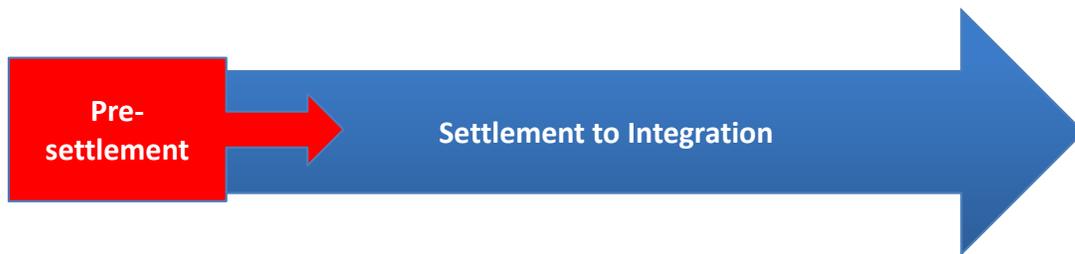
Based on this research there appears to be a time prior to settlement (i.e., pre-settlement) whereby some refugees require unique supports and services to address their future settlement needs. Certainly within this SWIS program it was noted that there are not always sufficient services to address the needs of these pre-settlement refugees. That said, it is noteworthy to add that the SWIS workers in this school district and the external agencies often do attempt to provide such specialized services even when they may exceed their current mandates. Based on this study it appears that pre-settlement refugees are not prepared to enter the settlement process as currently conceptualized and there needs to be time and resources to prepare pre-settlement refugees to enable them to enter the settlement stage of the continuum and proceed from settlement to integration.

Currently, it appears that concepts of settlement continuums have not clearly defined this low starting point for immigrants in general and specifically for the refugee population. Notwithstanding all the current literature that exists around initial settlement and pre-migration there has arisen new factors since the changes to the *Refugee Act*

that place pre-settlement as an area that is lacking current supports and resources. In addition, as outlined by Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia there has been a shift in the focus of Canada's refugee resettlement program. In a report, *Changing Faces, Changing Neighbourhoods: Government Assisted Refugee Settlement Patterns in Metro Vancouver*, the authors state that, "The implementation of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) shifted the focus of Canada's refugee resettlement program away from those with the 'ability to establish' in Canada to those "most in need of protection" (Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia, 2010, slide 14). This shift has resulted in the arrival of refugees with higher needs than may have previously been experienced in Canada. This would suggest that a phenomenon is now present with high-needs refugees, which was the case of the SWIS worker's experience in this study. Concurrent to this phenomenon are recent changes to the *Refugee Act*, *Refugee Reform, Refugee Protection Act* (Bill C-31, 2012). This Act has raised some concerns in particular with the Canadian Council for Refugees (2012) such as hasty deadlines for refugee claimant cases, designated countries of origin, mandatory detentions, and a 1-year bar on access to Pre-Removal Risk Assessment for refused claimants, along with applications for humanitarian and compassionate consideration. This is relevant to mention at this point in the discussion, as these changes appear to be counterproductive to the pre-settlement stage articulated in this study and recent understandings of the vast barriers facing refugees due to prior torture, trauma, war, post-traumatic stress, and other concerns. Based on the current refugee resettlement situation the concept of pre-settlement aligns with the reality in the field.

Pre-settlement is a major finding of this study and is articulated in two ways. First as an expanded area of the settlement continuum and second as a taxonomy of integration. Figure 6.1 introduces this notion of pre-settlement as an extension of the typically viewed path of settlement to integration by demonstrating that an area exists, in particular for refugees, which is a much earlier starting point on this continuum.

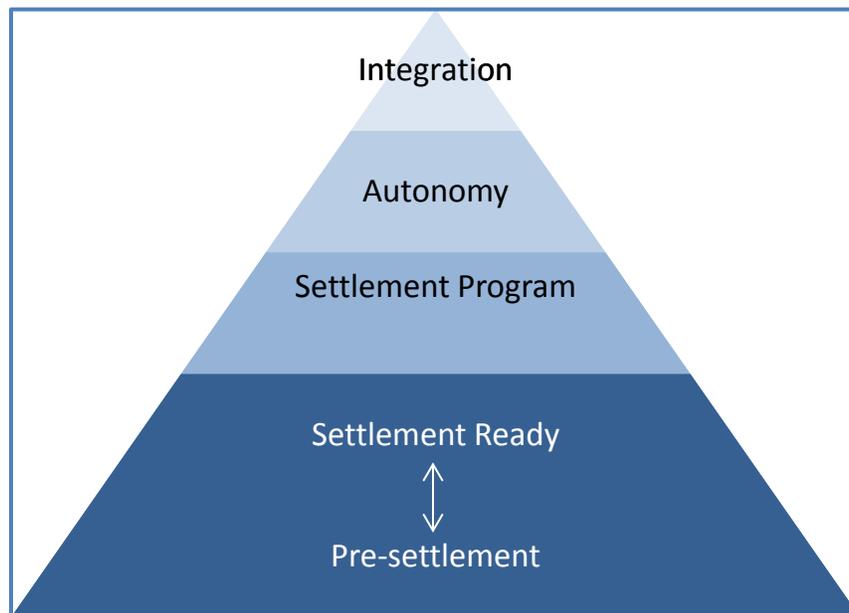
Figure 6.1. Pre-settlement: Continuum to Integration (Holt, 2013)



This continuum represents the starting point referred to in this discussion as pre-settlement whereby refugees are not only concerned with settlement, but also have many associated stresses, trauma, and inexperience with many aspects of their new society. This is a stage where inexperience and lack of or non-existent prior knowledge is pervasive as refugees attempt to make sense of their new community and home. At this point in their journey refugees may be overwhelmed with what is new and different. Many of the challenges facing refugees require cultural mediation. For example banking assumes concepts of currency; school assumes general understanding as to what student roles look like; housing requires knowledge of appliances; shopping is steeped in understanding of food categories—Western food—retail to name just some. All of these noted examples speak to potential gaps in understanding of societal norms and procedures and the reality of the many challenges facing refugees as they try to not only make sense of a new system, but also as they find themselves for the first time in their life in a grocery market, for example. These challenges are where the barrier to settlement appears to be most significant for one particular immigrant group.

The next part of the discussion introduces a taxonomy that expresses the pre-settlement stage more specifically by suggesting that there are two intertwined stages below settlement that many refugees are functioning at rendering them ill-equipped to begin the settlement process; thus entering the SWIS program with an inability to fully embrace the program in the mandated timeframe or ability to reach intended Ministry outcomes. This taxonomy was presented in various stages earlier in this study to demonstrate where the existing SWIS program's mandate exists and the refugee preparedness factor outlined in Chapter 5. What follows next is the completed taxonomy to integration based on the results and conclusions of this study (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2. Completed Taxonomy to Integration (Holt, 2013)



There are many reasons why a refugee may not be settlement ready. Based on the interview responses in this study there is a strong indication that some SWIS program resources are being applied to the first two stages of the taxonomy. As there is no recognition of intensive pre-settlement needs, one may safely assume that the Ministry mandate is focussed on at least the third level of the Settlement Taxonomy. This indicates a gap in the program service in the field and the intended outcomes as prescribed by the Ministry. This taxonomy is the full expression of the concepts discussed in this study. It appears that this is an area of great demand with limited resources available; thus SWIS workers are addressing issues that are outside of the parameters of their intended mandate. The lowest stage—pre-settlement—in this context considers the earliest stage of arrival whereby many of the current needs for refugees are based on stabilization. At this early stage many refugees are arriving with various levels of trauma that is the immediate concern. Refugees in this study at the pre-settlement stage were often referred to by SWIS workers as either hard-to-reach families and/or those families who have fallen through the cracks. It appears, based on this study, that there is an initial time when SWIS workers are attempting to settle their refugee clients in their most basic needs. During the Settlement Ready stage SWIS workers can then begin to build on this introduction to basic tasks. It is during the Settlement Ready stage that refugees begin to be bridged toward the Settlement Program in its current iteration based upon the Ministry mandate. Based on the

taxonomy resulting from this research and representing voices from the field there is a strong recommendation that the SWIS program mandate be expanded upon to service the pre-settlement needs of refugees.

All 13 of the research participants agreed that settlement is different for refugees and their families. Although the SWIS workers in this study generally reported much success in their role, many of the challenges expressed were indeed based around the pre-settlement stage. The pre-settlement population are typically refugees who are arriving in the host country with extraordinary barriers to settlement and in most cases stress levels that negatively impact their ability to settle. Most notably, were experiences around working with the Somali and Rohingya refugees in this particular school district. Many of these refugees have spent most of their lives, if not their entire lives, in refugee camps. The core gaps in prior understanding and transferable experiences place refugees at the bottom level of the taxonomy. This research did not seek to find how long it takes to move up to the next level of the hierarchy, but I would suggest that it could take many years: in some cases a lifetime.

Figure 6.2 represents where the current SWIS program operates and a readiness factor required to enter the SWIS program. There are many reasons why a refugee may not be settlement ready. Based on the interview responses there is a strong indication that some SWIS program resources are operating at the bottom stage of the taxonomy. The current SWIS program operates at least at the Settlement Program stage of the taxonomy. Newcomers arrive at this school district and are immediately connected with the SWIS program, which focuses on settlement, not particularly on pre-settlement. The findings of this research conclude that there are indeed two stages below this Settlement Program level of the taxonomy that need to be seriously considered when working with refugees at the pre-settlement phase. Within the 1-year mandate it is the intent that SWIS workers get families to a level of independence whereby they have autonomy in their individual lives. Based on this research the 1-year mandate is not appropriate for refugees arriving at the pre-settlement stage.

Pre-settlement emerged as a key finding in this study based on the SWIS workers' narrative from this particular school district. The term pre-settlement is contained within this study and the current mandate of the SWIS program. Pre-settlement was pervasive in the data analysis and thus was appropriate to articulate as a

key finding in this section of the study. Pre-settlement is comprised of many barriers and encapsulates parts of the other three themes in this study. What follows next is discussion of these themes and how they impact the settlement process.

6.2.4. Health (Physical and Mental)

The topic of health permeated throughout many of the interview responses. Trauma and stress, it was reported, were a major area of concern when working with refugee families and it was evident in the responses that there is much overlap between mental and physical health. Trauma for most of the refugee stories reported stemmed from the early trauma experienced as a refugee: war, violence, torture, rape, witness of violence, murder, family murder, separation, and fear. Overall current levels of stress were noted as prevalent amongst the refugee families. There were certainly many factors contributing to this. To begin with there may be a pre-disposition for experiencing stress in the new country based on early stresses due to trauma experienced in the country of origin. This stress is concurrent with barriers of language, finances, resources, cultural understandings, and feelings of uncertainty; therefore, it is understandable that most refugees are under considerable stress. Domestic violence and tensions in family were unfortunately reported as an observable factor when working with some of the refugee families. Shifting of roles within the family was reported as a source of family stress.

Among the abovementioned health issues reported by SWIS workers working with refugee families were examples of cultural differences that serve as barriers to accessing services that could assist in the alleviation of some of these concerns. For example, for some ethnic communities taboos around separation and divorce may perpetuate a negative domestic situation by restricting the ability to free oneself from a difficult or abusive family situation. In many of these situations the concept of family counselling may be unheard of. Processes around acquiring Medical Services Plan insurance coverage needs are most likely a new concept for most refugee families. Similar to this is a lack of understanding related to Canadian systems in the medical profession such as: referrals, drop-in clinics, emergency procedures, and hospital protocols. This may result in health situations remaining unresolved. It was also noted that those refugees with extensive experience in refugee camps are not accustomed to 'taking control' of their own situation; in refugee camps services are provided not sought.

Finally, a large area of concern was noted for the refugee claimant population. For this group of individuals many health services are simply not accessible to them. This group, for the most part, is already suffering from the stress of the unknown of their situation; they could be deported at any time.

6.2.5. Home/School Relationships

The health stresses outlined above proved to be ongoing challenges as refugee families navigate through settlement and eventually integrate in the host community. These challenges have an impact beyond individual households often resulting in challenges at the school level. It seemed, according to some SWIS workers, that often the parents did not understand the concept of home/school relationship and strongly felt that it is entirely the school system's role and responsibility to educate their child. This further challenges both the school support system and ultimately student success. This particular attitude seemed to cross several different ethnic groups. There were two distinct groups in this situation: those refugee families who had experience with formal schooling in their country of origin and those who had little to no experience. For the first group it appeared to be a matter of differences in educational systems and background experience. In their country of origin the educational systems were likely less focused on the home/school relationship and its relevance; and for the second group there was no experience at all to draw upon and little to no understanding of a school structure and system.

For refugees who come from a long-term refugee camp situation the home/school relationship poses a unique circumstance for some parents. It was noted by a SWIS worker that in the refugee camps all decisions are pre-determined; there is no parenting involved in day-to-day decisions. Issues around parenting can be a newfound stress for some parents, as they are simply not used to their own children looking to them for direction because in the camps all directives and organizational structures came from above the parents. This situation may cause stress to parents because, in some instances, for the first time they are in an authoritative role in their own lives. This was not necessarily articulated as a positive change but rather a new role that caused a great deal of stress to the parent whose experience as a parent in a refugee camp consisted of daily line ups for basic needs with no choice. In many cases their whole existence in refugee camps is predicated on daily survival. Parenting in this

manner is a new role for many of our refugee parents and a lot to be tasked on them within a short period of time once they arrive in Canada

6.2.6. Identity

This particular theme was arguably the most challenging to tally and quantify precisely. Unlike pre-settlement, health or home/school relationship this theme is comprised of so many areas and overlapping pieces of the other themes. For example, struggling with home/school relationships due to a change in family dynamics would have an impact on identity. This is an area where SWIS workers can have a strong impact on refugee clients. Many SWIS workers have experienced similar challenges around belonging and identity; thus, they are positioned to fully understand and potentially assist refugees with these challenges. SWIS workers have an advantage in terms of cultural mediation and insider perspective that may be viewed as an asset of the SWIS program.

6.2.7. Key Findings Conclusion

The concept of pre-settlement is contained within the boundaries of this study. It was clear based on the interviews of the 13 SWIS workers that this is an area of concern when working with the refugee population. The pervasiveness of the many barriers facing refugees is a concern for SWIS workers in this study and much of their time is spent addressing these needs. This study concludes that more resources be in place to support these needs and that the current mandate of the SWIS program be expanded to meet the many pre-settlement needs. It was important to begin this section by introducing the key findings of this study. This provides a framework for discussion of the interview findings. Additionally, the term pre-settlement will now be incorporated into the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations in this chapter. Each question in the interview referenced one or more of these findings eventually resulting in the articulation of pre-settlement and the identification of the other three major barriers to successful refugee integration. What follows is a return to the original research questions and subsequent discussion around interview questions and the resulting narratives from the field.

6.3. Research Questions

6.3.1. Research Question 1

What were the lived experiences of SWIS, who were working with refugee families in a large British Columbian urban school district between 2008-2011, as they strove to meet the intended outcomes of the Settlement program?

As a result of the experiences shared by SWIS workers they view themselves, by and large, as well prepared to perform in this role based on their individual background and experience. According to the SWIS workers interviewed, this large urban school district has a centrally-organized approach that seems to be working well. SWIS workers are able to connect with each other on a daily basis and have easy access to program management and administration. This centralized model has culminated in a positive school culture where SWIS workers and others strive to meet the needs of the newcomer families in this community. This was evident through the interview process whereby each SWIS worker indicated a high level of job satisfaction and a great deal of passion for the work they do. They take their role very seriously; in fact, some noted that at times it is difficult to shut it off at the end of the day. It is noteworthy that many of the SWIS workers conveyed to me that sometimes the boundaries of their role are either unclear or non-productive. In particular the inability to translate was viewed as an area that does not always seem logical. I sensed that this was an area where SWIS workers had difficulties with understanding the boundaries due to their job parameters. Douglas articulated this frustration:

You know when a principal or a doctor calls me they need the language first, but for some reason this program is structured that we are not interpreters, we are not translators, so we cannot actually give the time that this family needs, and I think they are getting faulty help. (Douglas, October, 2011)

At this point it may be that it is not clearly defined when SWIS workers can translate and when they cannot. The Ministry mandate indicates that they can translate around “settlement issues” but the lines may not be that clear. As SWIS workers, for the most part, are part of a shared culture it seems logical that translation would be a part of the SWIS program mandate. All SWIS workers commented that their experience has helped them strive to meet the Ministry outcomes.

SWIS workers, who work closely with newcomers at the pre-settlement stage, in particular refugees, spend a great deal of their time assisting these clients. Technically their caseload may be smaller than other SWIS workers, but the time spent settling these families is consistent with the workload of other SWIS workers who do not work with refugee clients. Clients at the pre-settlement stage of the continuum require very basic assistance that is not always available as an external outreach resource for SWIS workers. Settling initial needs is such a critical step toward long-term success for pre-settlement newcomers and SWIS workers are able to support this population at a most valuable and vulnerable time. This is another area where boundaries within the role either do not make sense to SWIS workers or need to be extended in the Ministry mandate to include aspects of their role where they are able to impact at this juncture. A good example of this is enabling SWIS worker to conduct home visits. According to the SWIS workers in this study, the lack of services for those at the pre-settlement stage has placed an unintended strain on the initial program mandate. This is an important consideration for program review, in particular reviews or evaluations that are weighted heavily with quantitative data and reporting as data of that nature would not necessarily reflect accurately the role in the field. For example, if connecting clients to services is a measurement of success yet some clients are not settlement ready then how is their success measured? Referring to the Taxonomy of Settlement discussed earlier many of the SWIS workers in this study are performing their duties at the early stages of this taxonomy. SWIS workers in this school district are managing this gap in services very well, and in this particular school district there are several internal program initiatives successfully in place to meet the needs of pre-settlement newcomers. For SWIS workers working with pre-settlement newcomers meeting some of the Ministry objectives may be a daunting task in particular in reference to a 1-year mandate to settle families. For families arriving with such great core deficiencies in skills and transferable life experiences the idea of settling into schools and communities will take a long time and tremendous supports to get there. SWIS workers working with these families are spending much of their time providing basic services that are time consuming. Although this vulnerable group are demanding they are the ones who, left to their own devices, may never find the support required and thus not settle successfully into schools and communities. The SWIS program model in this study addresses this concern by ensuring that all newcomers in this school district are connected with SWIS services, thus, those who may have slipped through the cracks are connected to services at a

critical stage of their settlement where supports and interventions at this early stage of settlement will have long-term benefits and positive economic impact by moving families toward independence in a more efficient and timely manner.

In conclusion, the SWIS workers in this case study view their role as valuable within this school district. They have built a good rapport within their school district and feel they have made a difference in the lives of the students and families they serve. They have gained a great deal of knowledge pertaining to available resources in the community and ensure that families are connected to appropriate services. They manage to work toward the program outcomes despite working with some of the most challenging situations. Each year they connect with approximately 4,000 families and assist with the early stages of settlement. They truly are a welcoming force in this school district and service a diverse population of clients as indicated by the statistical information provided by this district.

6.3.2. Research Question 2

How has this program assisted refugee families in the settlement process into the school community and community at large?

Analysis of the data resulted in the emergence of four key themes or strands: health, home/school relationship, identity, and the newly articulated concept of pre-settlement. Barriers to successful settlement and integration were, for the most part, embedded in these four themes. Most of the responses to the interview questions revealed anecdotes that supported the importance of these themes. Interwoven within each of these themes are concepts of cultural mediation and the value of the role of SWIS workers working in this capacity. As is clearly expressed by Figure 6.2, achieving integration requires a hierarchical and systematic process. What was provocative and prevalent in the findings is that many refugees are functioning at the very bottom of this hierarchy at the pre-settlement stage. It is at this stage where many of the demands of SWIS workers are called upon. The findings suggest that much of SWIS worker time is spent assisting refugees who are struggling with a variety of barriers preventing them from even beginning the settlement stage. At this pre-settlement stage refugees are often traumatized, shocked, and ill equipped to fully utilize the settlement services offered. This research has identified this need and gap in services to meet the needs of refugees at the pre-settlement stage. SWIS workers in their responses were positive in

their outlook and proud of the success stories whereby the program has impacted pre-settlement refugees in a positive manner. An important component of the success of meeting the needs of this vulnerable group is the placement of this program as the first-point-of-entry into the school district for all newcomers arriving in this community. Without this model it is unlikely that this particular group would know how to connect with community resources, let alone know that they need to connect. As several SWIS workers indicated this model really helps to provide support for those who would likely “slip through the cracks” if this program was not accessible to them. Schools play a critical role in the reception of refugee students in particular those with so many barriers and core deficiencies and dispositions due to the refugee experience. At this stage, refugees require specific support for students to settle into school communities. SWIS workers serve an important role in this adjustment stage. A shared cultural background and shared language provides an authentic and accurate response to the settlement needs of refugees. SWIS workers who do not have a shared background and language also provide a valuable support for refugees during the settlement stage particularly those who understand the many needs and barriers present in the refugee population. As always, it is not necessarily assisting directly, but knowing where resources are and directing accordingly. All SWIS workers in this district are very experienced and knowledgeable in this regard.

6.3.3. Research Question 3

What success and challenges have SWIS workers encountered in this role?

As indicated earlier the SWIS workers reported an overall sense of success experienced in the program. The greatest measure of success was twofold: the children beginning to adjust in school and/or the family finally feeling a sense of stability. At the school level sometimes simply feeling comfortable for the student was a measure of success. The successes noted were accounts, by and large, of anecdotal narratives where the student and their families were beginning to find connections to schools and the community. Success in schools was never once described by SWIS workers in terms of academic achievement. Success in schools was noted as a measurement of social adjustment and engagement in the learning process. Once this comfort level is achieved it is far more likely that students begin to engage in their own learning. Most challenges noted at the school level were again around cultural understandings or

misunderstandings of how Canadian school systems operate and general philosophical differences in the role of schools. The challenges most noted were concerned with discipline, rigour of Canadian school system, conflicting opinions or lack of experience in terms of the parental role in a child's education.

This study has revealed that SWIS workers do have a positive impact on school adjustment to school culture. And, by extension, as they assist in the general settlement of parents and guardians an overall improvement to the settlement process occurs. The role of SWIS workers is a complementary service to schools and community and alleviates the pressure of refugee settlement and integration from individual schools that are already challenged to meet the needs of the day-to-day operation of large diverse schools. With a clear mandate to assist in all areas of settlement, despite the gaps in services identified through this research, the SWIS program is working to assist in improved settlement practices with a focus on immigration reception and long-term strategies for integration. The SWIS program, certainly in this school district, has a unique and impactful outcome for refugees at the pre-settlement stage of the continuum to integration.

6.3.4. Research Question 4

To what extent has the experience of SWIS workers been congruent with the intended outcomes of the program?

As presented in the findings section a quantitative approach was incorporated to seek this information regarding Ministry outcomes. The data revealed that the Ministry outcomes were given consistently high rankings by SWIS workers in terms of their importance; however, variances occurred at the level of implementation in the field and time devoted to the outcomes. Each of the five outcomes will be discussed individually in this next section.

6.3.5. Helping Children Adjust to School Culture and Focus on Learning While Providing Their Parents with Information and Resources on Settlement and Integration

At first glance this seems like a reasonable and focussed outcome; indeed, all 13 SWIS workers ranked it as significantly important. However, as discussed, the implementation in the field and the time spent is not congruent with the significance of

this goal. Perhaps this goal could be revised to delineate clearly between working with children and working with parents: thus two objectives. Focussing on learning is not the immediate need of all children, in particular those at a pre-settlement stage. If this is indeed a program focussed on settlement, then adjusting to school culture should be the main aspect of this goal; the learning will follow. As indicated by SWIS worker responses the role in schools is quite different from their role working with parents. In fact, some SWIS workers did not respond to this question because they did not feel that they could accurately delineate the implementation and time spent on this goal when serving the needs of both the children and the parents; they viewed it as distinctly different. As discussed throughout this paper the needs of the parents are great. Connecting parents to resources and providing information on settlement is considered a very important aspect of the SWIS worker role. With this being such an important piece, and the fact that the implementation of this was reportedly low, a strong recommendation is that the outreach aspect of the SWIS worker role be reviewed. With a broad goal such as this one it is hard to achieve as in many cases SWIS workers are, at times, tasked with pedestrian activities that deter from their ability to reach this outcome. Based on this research there is enough supporting commentary from the field to consider breaking this outcome into two distinct outcomes: one focussing on children's adjustment to school and the other based on the settlement needs of the parents.

For the pre-settlement immigrant reaching this outcome is challenging. In relation to student learning there may be significant gaps in prior learning, in some instances refugees may have no formal education to draw upon. Focussing on learning may be extremely difficult for these students as learning is impacted by these gaps in prior experience and knowledge. In addition, parents of these students are likely struggling to settle themselves; therefore, SWIS workers will not necessarily see the full implementation of this goal. Some SWIS workers, four, definitely made a distinction between their role as Settlement workers and the role of Multicultural workers in this school district. They viewed the first part of this goal focusing on adjusting to school culture as a grey area between the two roles; thus a recommendation to clearly define the differences would assist in a clear path to settle students in school to move toward a focus on learning. For some, those at the pre-settlement stage, the whole concept of school is new and/or different, thus it will take pre-settlement students a good deal of

time to adjust to their new environment. And for many, the culture shock may be overwhelming.

All 13 SWIS workers ranked this outcome as significant, which may indicate that this outcome is significant and one that all stakeholders may want to strive to reach. The gap identified in this research between the intended outcome and the reality in the field, I suggest, is due in part to SWIS workers working with pre-settlement immigrants and a need for clearer boundaries clarified within the role. Providing families with resources and services assumes that those scaffolds are in place, yet this is not necessarily the case for pre-settlement immigrants resulting in SWIS workers being faced with this challenge.

6.3.6. Increasing Parents' Understanding of Canadian Culture and School Systems

This outcome has a broad focus. Understanding Canadian culture can take a very long time; similarly understanding the school systems takes a long time, in particular when there are vastly different concepts between newcomers' personal school experience and that of the new system. What this research demonstrated is that the two main barriers are time and incongruent understanding of school systems. The concept of understanding Canadian culture is not clearly articulated in the mandate and could be open to interpretation based on the broad definitions of culture. For example does this outcome suggest Canadian culture encapsulates: customs, traditions, language, and Canadian values? If that is the case, then some of our refugee population, indeed likely some mainstream newcomers, have a very, very long process ahead of them. This is not an attainable immediate goal for those who are struggling to understand basic concepts around day-to-day survival and lifestyle. Increasing understanding of the school systems is undoubtedly a critical outcome of the SWIS program. The main barrier in this instance did not come from the operations around the school system, but rather the barrier most reported by SWIS workers was that parents had many fears, concerns, and attitudes around the school system. This is an area where SWIS workers can have a critical impact during the early stages of both pre-settlement and settlement as they are able to explain concepts of schooling through a shared language and background.

With this outcome there is a gap between the level of importance of this outcome and the actual time spent in the field implementing this outcome. It appears that understanding Canadian culture and school systems will take a much longer time for pre-settlement and refugee newcomers to meet this outcome. Understanding Canadian culture, in the way that is likely intended by this outcome, extends far beyond the capabilities for this group of individuals who are in many cases simply looking for a way to survive. In addition, as the taxonomy of settlement suggests, many refugees are functioning well below the settlement-ready phase of the taxonomy. As well, schools are complex, diverse, and fast-paced. Many of the schools in this district are very large and present many barriers to all newcomers entering the school system. For the parents of the pre-settlement and refugee immigrants this may be their first experience with a school system, which is further complicated by the volume and complexity of large urban school districts.

6.3.7. Increase Parent Involvement in the School and Community

This outcome is contingent upon understanding, at least minimally, how our school systems and communities operate. Again, this is hard to do when a family is struggling to fulfil basic settlement needs. This particular outcome had the least amount of anecdotal reporting, which, I suggest, stems from that fact that many SWIS workers working with refugees are simply not at this point of involvement yet. Involvement requires a level of commitment from the parent, and many newcomers are not at that stage. That said this is a very relevant outcome as prescribed by the Ministry as student success typically requires parental involvement with the student's learning. With this being such a critical goal it is unfortunate that the barriers are great and the time required to reach this goal is not achievable for many refugees within the timeframe of the SWIS program. Based on this reality it may be advisable to review the concept of first year or few years of settlement to enable those families who are at the pre-settlement stage to access the program for longer periods. It is appropriate that 4 out of five outcomes begin with *increase* or *help* as this implicates that the expectation of the outcome is not a full understanding of schools and communities and integration into both arenas but rather more of an introduction. This is an important notion to consider when discussing, evaluating, or reporting on the program in any way. The lower ratings for those outcomes that directly have school adjustment as part of the goal attest more to

parent attitudes about school than indicators of any ineffectiveness on the SWIS program or the school interaction with SWIS workers. There appears to be more time spent on those objectives, but not as much implementation. The SWIS worker responses suggest this is due to cultural perceptions of schools, fear of authority figures, and simply not understanding the concept of home/school relationship that is so greatly valued in the host culture. It was noted several times that parents either do not understand the importance of their role in educating their child or in some cases there was indication that parents have no desire despite the language barrier:

6.3.8. Assess Needs of Immigrant Families and Barriers to Successful Integration

Assessing needs is an ongoing aspect of the SWIS workers' role and an outcome that is embedded in their day-to-day work. This outcome could be seen as the first stage of the next outcome as the two are connected explicitly. It is one thing to assess the needs, in this case for refugees, but if the services and programs are not there then it may fall back on the SWIS workers to fill in the needed gaps. This could result in a lot of time spent assessing needs and barriers with no possible solution; thus, SWIS workers may unintentionally pick up the pieces. This particular point was made by several SWIS workers who indicated that it is one thing to assess the needs, but it is a whole different situation to attempt to align services based on client needs. As with the other outcomes pre-settlement emerged as a formidable barrier to implementing this outcome. Of the five intended outcomes, this outcome presents the biggest gap between how important SWIS workers feel it is and the actual time spent in the field implementing this outcome. Ten SWIS workers viewed it as significant and two viewed it as moderate or considerable respectively. The implementation of this outcome was ranked as significant by only two SWIS workers as a result of lack of availability of services as indicated in their responses, in particular for pre-settlement clients.

6.3.9. Increase Access to Programs and Services and Work to Improve the Effectiveness of Those Programs

Connecting to services is an area that requires further attention and coordination. As discussed earlier SWIS workers view this outcome as extremely important in the early stages of settlement, and in particular for clients at the pre-settlement stage. In some ways this outcome should be listed as the first outcome, if we were to view the

outcomes in any way sequentially. This outcome may be views as the foundational outcome of the five outcomes. By connecting families, particularly those at the pre-settlement stage, immediately to the appropriate services is paramount to their future successful integration into schools and communities—the other four outcomes. Based on this research there is not a seamless system in place that easily connects clients with services. In addition, this is an area where there needs to be increased services that can support the pre-settlement population. In this particular school district, based on client needs, it is worth noting that the SWIS program works collaboratively with resources and other school departments that exist within this district. In addition to the apparent lack of resources for this particular group of immigrants there were indicators that the external service providers where either non-cooperative or could not meet the needs of the clients thus sending the clients back to the SWIS workers.

6.3.10. General Conclusions of Five Ministry-intended Outcomes

In general, what this aspect of the data collection revealed is that although SWIS workers concur with the relevance and importance of the intended outcomes of the program, their front-line experience is not fully congruent with these Ministry outcomes. This view is important as often intent and reality can be misaligned. The SWIS workers in this case indicated through their responses that the implementation of the five outcomes was not generally consistent with the level of importance they placed on each outcome or the time spent on each outcome. Further interview questions and responses offer some rationalization for this apparent incongruence. As the narratives were presented, in most cases anecdotal, there were strong indicators that the needs of the clients are not easily addressed by facilitating workshops or providing explanations of services for example, but an unmeasured, yet present, level of service is focussed on assisting clients at the pre-settlement level. The needs of the clients are so rudimentary at this stage of settlement that SWIS workers oftentimes indicated how their time is spent assisting clients at this very vulnerable and overwhelming stage of the settlement process. Time spent on the outcomes also did not align with the significance of the outcome. SWIS workers are tasked with many day-to-day responsibilities and required reporting expectations on cases, which is an essential requirement of the role, in addition to working directly with their clients. The role of SWIS workers is pivotal in bridging families into the school system and community at large; however, the need for a

broader definition of their role and careful consideration of the complexities involved working with in particular the pre-settlement population and the provision of increased services would assist in a more robust mandate and extension of services. It was clear that the frontline experience is challenging to contain within the current boundaries of the program. It is difficult to draw the line where services end, and it is not easy to clearly define this conundrum to the clients they serve. All SWIS workers value their position and articulated a genuine passion for the work they do. The overall outcomes are being met on a surface level, but there is room for expansion to move in the direction where the implementation and time spent on the outcomes is more congruent with the stated outcomes.

6.4. Refugee Family Experience

Analysis of the data resulted in the emergence of the concept of pre-settlement and three key themes or strands: health, home/school relationship, and identity and most of the responses to the interview questions revealed anecdotes that supported the importance of these themes. Interwoven within each of these themes are concepts of cultural mediation and the value of the role of SWIS workers. As is clearly expressed by Figure 6.2, achieving integration requires a hierarchical and systematic process. What was provocative and prevalent in the findings is that many refugees are functioning at the very bottom of this hierarchy at the pre-settlement stage. It is at this stage where many of the demands of SWIS workers are called upon. The findings suggest that much of SWIS workers' time is spent assisting refugees who are struggling with a variety of barriers preventing them from even beginning the settlement stage.

6.5. SWIS Role as Cultural Mediator and Cultural Insider

It is in the scenarios outlined above that a shared cultural background and common language can assist in the understanding and navigation between the school expectations and the perception and/or understanding of those expectations in the home. This does not have to be the case in all cases as those from a different cultural background certainly understand their role and know where to direct clients and understand the process of settlement and integration, but certainly if needed a shared

cultural background is an asset. Part of the role of SWIS workers is that of an insider working within a particular ethnicity. One particular interview question addressed the concept of insider perspective. SWIS workers were asked, “In what ways has your shared cultural background assisted you? Have there been times when your cultural familiarity has hindered you? Responses to this question were predominantly positive with SWIS workers feeling that their shared cultural background is definitely an asset in their day-to-day work as a SWIS worker. It was noted several times that SWIS workers are also part of an ethnic community that may be close knit and share in community events such as weddings or cultural celebrations. This situation raised concerns around shutting off their role and not answering questions or providing information simply because they are not at work. These concerns ranged from general questions regarding resources and services to more specific requests. Also cited were issues around clanship within certain ethnic groups. This, at times, manifested in tensions between SWIS and the families they serve. However, over all the shared cultural background was perceived as an advantage not a hindrance.

6.6. Conclusion

Returning now to my opening comments in this paper highlighting the fact that Canada is a refugee-receiving country and is bound by this obligation to continue to receive refugee, and, in reference to Howard Adelman’s comment once again, that how we manage refugees in our country is indeed a testimony to our commitment to social justice. By extension how a school district receives and welcomes this vulnerable group of citizens can certainly attest to its commitment to social justice the final conclusion follows. This vulnerable population—refugees—is best received when strong support systems are in place. The SWIS program is a prime example of a program that provides this strong support system. Refugees were deliberately chosen in this study as a means to explore how the SWIS program is impacting a vulnerable group of immigrants, with the notion that if it works for refugees it should, by extension, have a positive impact on all newcomer families. As Canada continues to be a country with an official *Multiculturalism Act*, and is largely viewed as a world leader in multiculturalism, it is not surprising that a program like SWIS has been initiated and implemented across the nation. This program is working successfully, certainly in this school district, and offers

an example of Canada's progressive approach to immigration that can serve as an exemplar for other countries that concern themselves with immigration, settlement, and integration.

In conclusion, I shall attempt to make culminating remarks that tie together the various lenses of this research project: the etic perspective of the principal researcher, the emic perspective of the SWIS workers, the Ministry mandate, and the voices of the refugee clients as expressed by SWIS workers through the interviews. To begin with there are three areas that offer insight into the program and its operation: operational, strategic, and conceptual. The first area is from an operational perspective. In this regard the SWIS program examined provides a highly organized and centralized program. As one of the original pilot school districts for the BC SWIS program, this particular school district has been able to reflect and refine its practice since its inception in 2007. The current central infrastructure of this SWIS program offers a holistic approach to settlement. In specific response to the high needs of refugee clients this model offers additional services to meet the many needs of refugee families under one roof, so to speak. The culture of the central location is welcoming and collaborative. The centralized approach of this SWIS program, serves as an exemplar for replication in other school districts. The second area that seems to be working well is the strategic planning of the program. Again, by having a central location in which all newcomer families connect ensures that the program is accessible to all, in particular those families who may otherwise be hard to reach. This strategy has a significant impact on refugee families. Upon arrival to this school district these families can immediately begin accessing services that are critical to their settlement and long-term integration in the community. This model demonstrates a commitment to newcomer families with a long-range goal on improving student adjustment and ultimate achievement in schools. This particular SWIS program has continually grown since its inception. The final area of this program that, based on this research, needs further clarification and refinement is conceptually. It seems that the Ministry concept of the program is not being implemented at its fullest extent in the field, as demonstrated in the findings and discussion section of this paper. The intended outcomes outlined by the Ministry are appropriate, yet the findings suggest that many unintended consequences emerge in the field that impede the implementation of the outcomes and the extent of time devoted to these outcomes. This gap in services occurs mostly at the pre-settlement stage.

Ideally, the SWIS program would offer a pre-settlement entry program designed to prepare those who qualify an opportunity to receive the necessary support, and in particular, time to prepare for entrance into the current program and its existing mandate. By drawing on a case study design this research heard the first-hand accounts of how SWIS workers view their role on a daily basis and assisted in identifying some of the unintended consequences resulting from pre-settlement refugees.

The research participants offered a frontline insight into the daily work they do as SWIS. It was valuable that many different ethnic backgrounds were represented as well as a balance between genders and differences in past experience and education. It was crucial to this study that all participants have some level of experience working with refugees, or at least an understanding of the challenges facing this vulnerable population. Five SWIS workers have lived the refugee experience personally and can certainly understand the situation and all of its implications. All SWIS workers in the study expressed a sincere passion for the work they do and a level of commitment that is indeed admirable. Through their work they relayed many successes where the program has impacted families, in particular refugee families, in significant and positive ways. Through their stories and examples it was evident that this program is making a difference in the lives of newcomer families in this school district. All 13 SWIS workers indicated, in one way or another, examples of how difficult settlement is for the pre-settlement population. They articulated that this group of vulnerable immigrants has greater needs than mainstream immigrants and although they may be fewer in numbers than the overall newcomer population they require much support which can be both time consuming and difficult to find the appropriate service to address specific needs.

The SWIS worker role as cultural mediator is an important aspect of this program and in this case it is helpful when SWIS workers are from a similar background and culture. In terms of a shared language it is, at times, crucial to have a shared language to impart information to students and families. The role of cultural mediator truly assists refugees and others to navigate through the four main barriers: pre-settlement, health, home/school relationship, and identity. In this arena SWIS workers are able to accurately communicate key information to the families to assist them into the system and connect them with the services they may require. Liaising between students/families and schools was articulated as an area where it was helpful to understand the cultural background of the clients. For example, perceptions of the role

of schools are often misaligned with the realities and expectations in the Canadian school context and SWIS workers can bridge this gap by fully explaining the ins and outs, so to speak, of the school system.

The data for this study was collected and organized in a systematic manner. The initial stage involved piloting the survey and the interview questions at an adjacent large urban school district providing input and direction from the field to ensure that appropriate questions were asked or in some cases questions that earlier appeared to be valuable were, upon review, either re-crafted or eliminated from the survey and interview questions. The three SWIS workers were very candid and reflective in their responses—which was greatly appreciated—and appropriate revisions were made to the original draft. The revised survey questions were distributed to all SWIS workers in this district to ascertain basic background information, experience with refugees, and a willingness to participate in the interview process. A total of 13 SWIS workers participated in what proved to be a rich and comprehensive narrative of the work they do and the difference it is making. What emerged from the interview process was a very clear position that there is a need for greater services to meet the needs, in particular, of those who fit the pre-settlement stage. Many questions were responded to with anecdotal accounts of how basic the needs are for some of our newcomers. What also emerged through the candid expressions of the SWIS workers experience in the field was that there are definitely four major areas where attention is focussed and should continue as major areas of focus. Again, pre-settlement, health, home/school relationship, and identity are key areas where barriers to successful settlement and integration exist. The four strands that emerged as specific areas of concern offer confirmation to what may already been known in addition to offering strong recommendations for future attention.

In response to the five stated Ministry outcomes it was evident that the intended outcomes put forth from the Ministry were viewed as significant in most cases. The alignment of intended outcomes and reality in the field is an area that requires further attention and coordination. Based on this research there is not a seamless system in place that easily connects clients with services. In addition, this is an area where there needs to be increased services that can support the pre-settlement population. In this particular school district, based on client needs, it is worth noting that the SWIS program works collaboratively with resources and other school departments that exist within this

district. In addition to the apparent lack of resources for this particular group of immigrants there were indicators that the external service providers were either non-cooperative or could not meet the needs of the clients thus sending the clients back to the SWIS workers.

In general, what this aspect of the data collection revealed is that although SWIS workers concur with the relevance and importance of the intended outcomes of the program, their day-to-day experience is not fully congruent with these outcomes. Further interview questions and responses offer some rationalization for this apparent incongruence between policy and field. As the narratives were presented, in most cases anecdotal, there were strong indicators that the needs of the clients are not easily addressed by facilitating workshops or providing explanations of services for example, but an unmeasured, yet present, level of service is focussed on assisting clients at an under-scratch level. The needs of the clients are so rudimentary at this stage of settlement that SWIS workers oftentimes indicated how their time is spent assisting clients at this very vulnerable and overwhelming stage of the settlement process. Time spent on the outcomes also did not align with the significance of the outcome. SWIS workers are tasked with many day-to-day responsibilities and required reporting expectations on cases, which is an essential requirement of the role in addition to working directly with their clients.

The role of SWIS workers is pivotal in bridging families into the school system and community at large; however, the need for a broader definition of their role and careful consideration of the complexities involved working with in particular the pre-settlement population and the provision of increased services would assist in a more robust mandate and extension of services. It was clear that the job parameters are difficult to contain within the current boundaries of the program. It is, at times, unclear as to where to draw the line between services within in the mandate and those that are not, and it is not easy to clearly define this conundrum to the clients they serve. In my experience working through the case study of this particular school district model and having interviewed 13 participants in all cases they noted that yes overall the outcomes of the program were being met. All SWIS workers value their position and articulated a genuine passion for the work they do. The overall outcomes are being met on a surface level, but there is room for expansion to move in the direction where the implementation and time spent on the outcomes is more congruent with the intended outcomes.

6.7. Recommendations from the Research

Based on recommendations from the field and the interview process I would suggest that the following recommendations be considered:

1. The value of the SWIS is evident in this research and there is a strong recommendation that this program continue. Based on the interviews and questionnaires the need for this type of intervention is great, and if successful settlement and integration are intended outcomes by all stakeholders then programs such as SWIS need to remain in particular where the needs are great such as large populations of pre-settlement immigrants for whom settlement alone is a monumental process requiring great support and guidance; a role provided by SWIS workers.

2. In addition to a strong recommendation that this program continue to exist, based on this research it is advisable that the current job parameters of SWIS program be reviewed and revised. This is a role in which unintended outcomes have emerged whereby some SWIS workers are currently working beyond the intended job speculation at times. This phenomenon occurs as it is difficult to abruptly end services when the needs are great. For example, sending a pre-settlement immigrant to a health facility for the first time will require much more support than simply telling them where to go. Deep-rooted barriers exist based on lack of prior knowledge or experience with required concepts preventing settlement from being a straightforward act.

3. Based on my findings there is a gap in services, or an overall understanding of the required services to assist at the pre-settlement stage, that needs to be addressed. Referring to the pre-settlement population it is recommended that services that address basic settlement needs and health-care concerns would benefit the refugee population. As highlighted as a key thrust in this research this recommendation comes from a pervasive theme that was articulated in most of the interview responses and thus cannot be overlooked. It is recommended that services be added to the SWIS program that address basic settlement needs and a need for counselling and other health issues. This would offer a focussed approach to meeting the many needs of our most vulnerable population and assist them in essentially stabilizing before they can begin the settlement process, as one SWIS noted, "They must stand before they even walk" (Cathleen, October 2011).

4. Based on the low starting point of many refugees on the continuum from settlement to integration a recommendation is to add the articulated term and concept of pre-settlement as a beginning stage of the continuum. The taxonomy of integration indicates that there are two levels below the current settlement mandate in which SWIS workers are spending much time and energy providing services to refugees that will assist them to begin the settlement process. It is recommended that this taxonomy be considered when measuring the success of program outputs based on the current mandate of the SWIS program.

5. A final recommendation is that ongoing training be provided for SWIS. In particular more regular orientation sessions around the program objectives and mandate would be advisable. I also feel that more frequent and consistent communication from the Ministry would assist in a better understanding for SWIS workers in particular how their role actualizes in the field. Similarly I would highly recommend that SWIS workers have an avenue by which they can report the unintended outcomes and the lived experiences in the field in a way that is not numeric or quantifiable.

6.8. Recommendations from the Field

Overall the SWIS workers were satisfied and engaged in the program. They felt the program as a whole is working. There were nine direct recommendations from the field. Vetting those recommendations through the lens of a school district given its policies, liabilities, and risk management the following emerged as viable recommendations. It is noteworthy here to mention that in stating recommendations many SWIS workers articulated an understanding of how policy and procedures can limit the willingness of such recommendations; however, they felt it was important to voice these recommendations based on their experiences working with the families they serve. A recap of the recommendations is outlined below.

As noted in the presentation of data and findings the need for counselling services is a strong recommendation from the field. As a result of this perceived deficit in resources the SWIS workers often find themselves in the role of counsellor. It is not easy, understandably, to navigate between the mandated services that SWIS workers provide and the extended need of services required by refugee clients. During the

interview process it became apparent to me that this is a difficult position the settlement workers are placed in. As this role is, arguably, performed by people with tremendous human capacity and care, often their natural inclinations to help are challenged in this role. A high level of compassion and genuine concern for the welfare of their clients was represented through the SWIS workers' commitment and empathy expressed during the interviews. The stories they expressed and the difficulties facing these refugee families are often fraught with much trauma. This area of service, I believe, is one that needs further attention. The trauma experienced by many of the refugee families is indeed intense. Major areas of concern are around both physical and mental health. It was reported that often many of the women from refugee camps have reported sexual abuse cases to their settlement workers. In fact, more than one interview alluded to the fact that sexual abuse is typical and often women experience this multiple times in the refugee camps.

These are profound concerns, and certainly an inclusion of professional counselling services or outreach services that could address these specific needs is certainly noteworthy as a future direction to enhance the SWIS program. All of our concepts of settlement and integration are much better faced with a healthy body and mind and this direction may assist in a better adjustment scenario to the host country. In the case of refugee claimants it was noted that many services are not available to this particular group.

6.9. Recommendations Concerning Pre-settlement

The most pervasive theme, and for me impactful, throughout the research process was the concept of pre-settlement. Based on my research I would strongly recommend that this notion be addressed in a more cohesive, systemic, and meaningful way. The entire SWIS program is predicated on the mandate of settlement and eventual integration. I believe the definition and core understandings of settlement need to be more clearly defined and that consideration of the specific needs of those who arrive in Canada at the pre-settlement stage, particularly the refugee population, would benefit from a deeper analysis. The role of SWIS workers is of great value to this community. This research did not measure if the refugee population would have found their way to the SWIS program on their own or other community agencies; however, it is likely that

many of the refugee families would not understand the resources available to them in the community left to their own devices. I believe that connecting the SWIS program to school districts provides the most comprehensive ability for connecting with multi-barriered and hard-to-reach immigrants with the services they desperately require. Again, not a measured outcome of this research, but it is likely that most newcomers do arrive with children and will immediately contact schools. For those who are functioning at the pre-settlement stage connecting them with SWIS at the early stages of arrival to Canada enables them to begin the long process of settling and understanding their new environment.

Many of the barriers begin in the home environment. With many new unfamiliar household items and process around these items, it may be helpful to either extend the mandate of SWIS program to allow home visits, or connect with an outreach agency that can assist in this part of the earliest stage of settlement. Ideally, a shared language would be valuable. As demonstrated throughout this paper there are large information gaps and limited transferable skills. This extends the settlement process making it very difficult for this population to ever reach the integration stage of immigration.

Based on the expression of the practitioner of the SWIS workers in this large urban district it was evident that much effort and time is spent dealing with the needs of the pre-settlement community. It is this stage of the continuum that needs increased support. As a refugee receiving country we will continue to have people arrive in our country traumatized, illiterate, and pre-settlement. Placing SWIS workers in the role of cultural mediators is a solid step in the right direction of meeting the needs of this vulnerable population. Based on the success stories, I strongly believe that this program has had a positive impact on the refugee students and their families. SWIS workers are able to fully explain and relate to their experience and appropriately connect them to the services needed, assist them to navigate the school system, and in some cases provide them the inspiration that success is possible for them as well as demonstrated by the many personal success stories modelled to them by SWIS workers.

6.10. Recommendations for Further Inquiry

If relatively seamless articulation and community outreach are intended goals of the SWIS program then one strong recommendation would be to determine the outreach agencies' perception of a school district's Settlement Worker in Schools program and to determine where the potential gaps abound in their services when dealing with refugee families. This, I feel, is an important piece to ensure there is a holistic community-approach to settlement and integration of newcomers in particular refugee families to the host community.

Throughout this research process there were many times when a natural and new research thread emerged that was not addressed in this work. There is no shortage of questions for future research and inquiry; some suggestions include:

1. How do outside agencies articulate their experiences with the SWIS program?
2. How do we address the pre-settlement nature of our refugee families?
3. What current services would assist in the settlement of our pre-settlement population?
4. Is there a need to redefine settlement, or is there a need for a pre-settlement definition?
5. Further inquiry regarding the length of time required to meet settlement needs would be appropriate.
6. How has the SWIS program assisted in extending an understanding of settlement needs of families in our school community?
7. Are there other immigrant populations that are functioning at the pre-settlement level yet not categorized as refugee status?
8. How has the SWIS program impacted community outreach services?

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Appendix A: Ethics Consent



OFFICE OF
RESEARCH ETHICS

July 14, 2011

street address
Simon Fraser University
Multi-Tenant Facility
Room 230, 8900 Nelson Way
Burnaby, B.C. Canada
V5A 4W9

Tara Holt
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University

mailing address
8888 University Drive
Multi-Tenant Facility
Burnaby, B.C. Canada
V4A 1S6

Dear Tara:

**Re: A Case Study of the Lived Experience of Settlement
Workers in Schools (SWIS) Working with Refugee Families
in a Large Urban School District**
- Appl. #: 2011s0308

I am pleased to inform you that the above referenced Request for Ethical Approval of Research has been approved on behalf of the Research Ethics Board. This approval is in effect until the end date July 9, 2014, or only during the period in which you are a registered SFU student.

The Office of Research Ethics must be notified of any changes in the approved protocol. Request for amendments to the protocol may be requested by email to [REDACTED]. In all correspondence relating to this application, please reference the application number shown on this letter and all email.

Your application has been categorized as “minimal risk” and approved by the Director, Office of Research Ethics, on behalf of the Research Ethics Board in accordance with University policy R20.01, <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20-01.htm>. The Board reviews and may amend decisions or subsequent amendments made independently by the Director, Chair or Deputy Chair at its regular monthly meetings.

.../2



OFFICE OF
RESEARCH ETHICS

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“Minimal risk” occurs when potential participants can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms incurred by participating in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research.

The REB assumes that investigators continuously review new information for findings that indicate a change should be made to the study protocol or consent documents and that such changes will be brought to the attention of the REB in a timely manner.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the researcher, or the responsibility of the Student Supervisor if the researcher is a graduate student or undergraduate student, to maintain written or other forms of documented consent for a period of 1 year after the research has been completed.

If there is an adverse event, the principal investigator must notify the Office of Research Ethics within five (5) days. An Adverse Events form is available electronically by contacting

All correspondence with regards to this application will be sent to your SFU email address.

Please notify the Office of Research Ethics at _____ once you have completed the data collection portion of your project so that we can close this file.

Best wishes for success in this research.

Appendix B. Participant Survey Consent Form

Research Title: A Case Study of the Lived Experience of
Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)
Working with Refugee Families in a
Large Urban School District

Ethics Application: 2011s0308

Participant Request Letter

Dear SWIS worker:

I am a student at Simon Fraser University working on my Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership. The focus of my study is on the lived experience of Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) and how this experience relates to the settlement objectives of the program. In particular, this study will focus on SWIS who have experience working directly with refugee students and families.

This study is intended to be qualitative and descriptive, not evaluative. Your participation in this study is voluntary. The first stage of my data collection involves conducting a survey of SWIS workers in your school district to provide me with background information about your role and general information about the clients you work with. Shall you consent to participate in this study I will make available to you at your central location copies of my survey for you to complete at your convenience. The survey questions, which are provided along with this letter, will be used as a tool to provide an overall context to the SWIS program in this district and assist in the selection process of potential participants for the second stage of my research, which is to conduct in-person interviews. The data collected from the surveys will be kept in a secure place in which only I have access. The completed surveys will be kept in a sealed envelope and stored for two years in a locked cabinet that only I have access. Your name is not required as a survey response further ensuring the confidentiality of your participation.

The risk to you in participating is minimal, as there are no question responses that could result in conflict or a negative outcome to your position or identity. Other SWIS workers may be aware of your participation; however, your involvement will remain confidential by the researcher. Your identity will be kept confidential in the study findings. The proposed benefit of this study is to add to the growing understanding of the valuable work you do. As this is a relatively new position, this study offers an academic contribution to a fairly under researched field of investigation.

Research results will be available to all participants through the principal investigator by contacting her at (removed) or email (removed) Upon completion of this dissertation and approval of the academic community this dissertation will be published and available to the general public.

Permission to conduct research in this school district has been granted by the district. In addition to school district permission, this research is fully supported and agreed upon by the Management of the Settlement Workers in Schools program in this district. If you consent to participate in this survey, you are free to withdraw your participation at any time throughout the study. Your refusal to participate or withdraw after you have agreed

will have no negative impact or adverse effects on your evaluation or employment with the SWIS program or the school district as a whole. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at home (removed from original) or on my cellular (removed from original). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, Simon Fraser University (contact information removed from original).

Sincerely,

Tara Holt

Simon Fraser University

Principal Researcher/ Doctoral student

Consent: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C. Survey Intended for All SWIS Workers

Personal Information

1. How long have you been in Canada?
2. What is your country of origin?
3. How long have you been a SWIS worker in this school district?
4. What is your background/experience that led to your choosing to work in this role?
5. Describe your duties as a SWIS worker.
6. What cultural backgrounds and languages are represented in your caseload?
7. In your role as a SWIS worker, have you had experience working with refugee clients?
Yes_____ No_____
8. Describe your involvement working with refugee families as:
a: limited_____ b: average_____ c: extensive_____
9. What is your average overall 'caseload' ?
10. As part of your caseload, how many families are typically refugees?
11. Is your role as a SWIS worker different in any way when working with refugee families?
Yes_____ No_____
12. How long does a refugee family typically utilize your service?
13. Are you interested in participating in an in-person interview with the researcher where we can explore further your direct experience as a SWIS worker working with refugee clients?
Yes_____ No_____

Appendix D. Participant Interview Consent Form

Settlement Workers In Schools (SWIS)
Working with Refugee Families in a
Large Urban School District

Consent form for In-person Interview

Participant Request Letter

Dear SWIS worker:

I am a student at Simon Fraser University working on my Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership. The focus of my study is on the lived experience of Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) and how this experience relates to the settlement objectives of the program. In particular, this study will focus on SWIS who have experience working directly with refugee students and families.

This study is intended to be qualitative and descriptive, not evaluative. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Shall you consent to participate in this study I will arrange a time to meet with you for a 1- to 2-hour interview. The interview will be at my office, which is in very close proximity to your central office. The interview will be recorded to ensure authentic responses are used in the research. Copies of the transcripts will be provided to participants for verification and authenticity. The interview questions, which are provided along with this letter, will be semi-structured and intended as a discussion prompt. The data will be kept on a flash drive and stored for two years in a locked cabinet that only I have access to. Copies of the transcripts will also be stored in the same locked cabinet.

The risk to you in participating is minimal, as there are no interview question responses that could result in conflict or a negative outcome to your position or identity. Other SWIS workers may be aware of your participation in the interview; however, your involvement will remain confidential by the researcher. Your identity will be kept confidential in the study findings. The proposed benefit of this study is to add to the growing understanding of the valuable work you do. As this is a relatively new position, this study offers an academic contribution to a fairly under researched field of investigation.

Research results will be available to all participants through the principal investigator by contacting her at (removed from original) or email (removed). Upon completion of this dissertation and approval of the academic community this dissertation will be published and available to the general public. Permission to conduct research in this school district has been granted by the district. In addition to school district permission, this research is fully supported and agreed upon by the Management of the Settlement Workers in Schools program in this district.

If you consent to participate, you are free to withdraw your participation at any time throughout the study. Your refusal to participate or withdraw after you have agreed will have no negative impact or adverse effects on your evaluation or employment with the SWIS program or the school district as a whole. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at home (removed from my original) or on my cellular (removed from original). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a

participant in this research, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics, Simon Fraser University by (contact information removed from original).

If you agree to participate, kindly contact me to arrange an interview at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Tara Holt

Simon Fraser University

Principal Researcher/Doctoral student

Consent granted: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E. In-person Interview Questions

Research Question:

Research question: What are the lived experiences of Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), who were working with refugee families in a large BC urban school district between 2008-2011, as they strive to meet the intended outcomes of the Settlement program?

Program Outcomes and Expectations

1. What, in your opinion, are the intended Ministry outcomes of the SWIS program? How were you told of these goals and their importance? Does that carry on in your day-to-day experience?
2. Please respond to each Ministry-intended goal by indicating a) the importance, b) extent of the implementation and c) the time you spend on this in your experience working with refugee families. Please respond by using the following Likert scale:
1: none 2: some 3: moderate 4: considerable 5: significant

a: helping children adjust to school culture and focus on learning while providing their parents with information and resources on settlement and immigration issues
b: increasing parents' understanding of Canadian culture and school systems
c: increase parent involvement in the school and the community
d: assess needs of immigrant families and the barriers to successful integration
e: increase access to programs and services and work to improve the effectiveness of those programs
3. How has your experience as a SWIS worker enabled you to reach these intended outcomes?
4. How do you best describe the settlement experience?
5. How is the settlement experience different for refugees?

Successes and Challenges Met Along the Way

6. How do you measure success in your role?
7. What successes have you experienced when working with schools?
8. What challenges have you encountered when working with schools?
9. How do the schools communicate success to you?

10. When working with schools, what challenges have you encountered working with refugee families?
11. Have you noticed any difference in the adaptation process between non-refugee and refugee parents and children? How has this adaptation gap affected each family?
12. What successes have you experienced when working with refugee families?
13. In what ways has your shared cultural background assisted you? Have there been times when your cultural familiarity has hindered you?
14. When working with refugees has your overall experience as a SWIS worker been consistent with the outlined role of the position? If yes, in what ways? If no, explain how your experience has been different from the expected parameters of the job and why you feel there is an inconsistency.
15. How do you report the successes and challenges of your role?
16. How do outside agencies communicate success to you?

Refugee Family Experiences

17. Is there a refugee family success story you can tell me?
18. What made the difference in this family's case?
19. Can you relay a story where you felt the program was not meeting the needs of a refugee family? What caused this situation to be unsuccessful?
20. What could have made their situation more successful?
21. In your experience working with refugee families, is there one story in particular that you feel best exemplifies the refugee experience with this program?
22. Overall, how has your experience as a SWIS worker working with refugee families matched the intended outcomes or expectations of the program?
23. If you were to recommend changes to the program, what might they be?

Appendix F. Summary of SWIS Participants

Country of origin Experience as SWIS	Background/experience	Experience working with refugees
Canada Oct 2007 (beginning)	Settlement experience inside/outside classroom ESL teacher for adult 1995-2007 Volunteer settlement services	Yes, extensive
Burma 4 years	Teacher in refugee camp (Thailand) Education Co-coordinator Camp Committee Nursing—refugee camp Interpreter in Canada Volunteer Community and School refugee camp Volunteer with students and parents	Yes, extensive
Nicaragua 4 years	BFA—Teaching Political activist in Nicaragua working with under-privileged Employment Counselor 8 years in Canada Settlement worker for Community organization in Canada 4 yrs. Active in Art organizations (current)	Yes, extensive
Russia 3 years	Language teacher: Russian and French/Russian comparative Literature to foreign students in Russia and Middle East Still teaching Russian in Canada Experience in non-profit organizations Montreal Vancouver: helping new immigrants and refugees as a counselor/translator	Yes, average
Kenya 3 years	BA Social Sciences Interest in working with oppressed Shared similar stresses as a refugee Worked in same capacity at two different organizations	Yes, extensive
South Sudan 3 yrs.	Since 1989 working with NGOs in Egypt 10yrs Experience in Quebec City working with displaced women and children	Yes, extensive

Country of origin Experience as SWIS	Background/experience	Experience working with refugees
Somalia 2.5 yrs.	Came to Canada as a Government sponsored refugee and experienced difficulties that new immigrants face when they settle. After 9 mos. of settlement in BC began volunteer work to help newcomers from Somalia Outreach worker with Pacific Immigrant Resource Society (current)	Yes, extensive
Ethiopia 3 yrs. 1 yr. as SWIS 2 yrs. as Multicultural Worker	Interpretation services for the UNHCR in Cairo Interpreter/translator Vancouver Refugee Board Settlement Worker (Burnaby Multicultural Society) Multicultural Health Broker—BC Multicultural Health Settlement Worker Divercity	Yes, average
El Salvador 4 years	English instructor/language	Yes, extensive
Iran 3 years	activist for equal rights (Iran) teacher 7 years Bachelors' Degree in Education Political activist and former political prisoner Speaks 4 languages Very interested to make a difference in newcomers' lives in Canada	Yes, limited
10 mos.	Social worker Burma and UN in Bangladesh Compassionate eye and heart to help those in need Has lived in many countries	Yes, extensive
Taiwan 3 yrs.	MA degree Education working in adult education HR training Volunteers at crisis centre Volunteers in community supporting immigrants	Yes, limited
Burma 3 yrs., 7 mos.	Experience as a refugee and immigrant Understanding of settlement process in new country Likes working with people I chose this role	Yes, extensive