

A STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF THE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM AT THE YMCA OF GREATER VANCOUVER

by

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ABSTRACT

The BC government contracted the YMCA of Greater Vancouver to provide the Connections Program, a Community Bridging Service to serve newcomers to Canada. The program has performed well on service quality but has not met the contracted service quantity. This may affect the YMCA of Greater Vancouver's funding potential. The purpose of this paper is to develop a strategy that effectively balances these two attributes, maximizes client satisfaction and thereby increases the YMCA's funding in the future.

The analysis also evaluates the Bridging Service sector's attractiveness to the YMCA (from a corporate perspective) by analyzing the sector's market trends and the competitive forces that shape them. The paper then examines the internal strengths and weaknesses of the Connections Program and assesses current performances. Finally, strategic alternatives are offered and the preferred alternative is recommended.

Keywords: immigrants; non-profit; YMCA; strategic analysis; settlement service

Subject Terms: Young Men's Christian Associations (Vancouver, B.C.); Nonprofit organizations -- British Columbia -- Vancouver -- Management -- Case studies; Strategic planning -- British Columbia -- Vancouver -- Case studies; Immigrants -- Services for -- Canada

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 A Global Non-profit Organization (NPO) - YMCA

The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) is one of the largest international non-profit organizations (NPO) in the world. It was established in 1844 and now stretches across 128 countries. YMCAs are no longer limited to young men or Christians, although George Williams founded the first YMCA as a substitute Bible study.¹ YMCAs welcome everyone regardless of religion, race, age, ability or income. As indicated by their mission statement, the YMCA is a charitable association dedicated to the development of people in spirit, mind and body as well as the improvement of local, national and international communities.²

The YMCA’s core values guide their every-day decision-making and actions. Their core values are “Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility”. YMCA Canada collaborates with members, volunteers, donors, staff and partners to support various programs and services. As an active member of the World Alliance of YMCAs, YMCA Canada is working to strengthen national YMCA movements globally to build YMCA capacity and stronger communities at home and abroad.

1.2 The YMCA of Greater Vancouver

Although the YMCA is a global organization, each association in each location is independent. Individual associations offer customized programs for their communities.

¹ The YMCA US website: http://www.ymca.net/about_the_ymca/

² The YMCA of Greater Vancouver website: www.vanymca.org/AboutUs.html

Local YMCAs in Canada are autonomous but are associated with a national office located in Toronto that provides support for shared purposes.

With 120 years of experience serving the Lower Mainland, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver now has four membership centers: YMCA Downtown, South Slope Family YMCA, Tong Louie Family YMCA and Chilliwack Family YMCA. These four facilities run various programs at different locations, covering health and fitness, English-language training, employment services, community services, outdoor education, childcare, etc.

The following analysis will present a series of Service-Customer Matrices (SCM) that provide a “snapshot” of the connections between the NPO’s services and customers.³ After going through the YMCA of Greater Vancouver’s current programs and services, I have first segmented its SCM by target customer ages (Table 1).

³ Anthony E. Boardman and Aidan R. Vining, *Using Service-Customer Matrices in Strategic Analysis of Nonprofits*, *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 10(4), 2000: 397-420.

Table 1: Customer–Service Metrics of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver

| Services | Clients | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|
| | Children (Under 12) | Youth (13-18) | Adult (19+) |
| Health and Fitness | | X | X |
| English Training | | X | X |
| Connections Program | X | X | X |
| Youth Exchanges Canada | | X | |
| New Venture Program | | | X |
| Summer Camp Program | X | X | |
| Childcare Service | X | | |
| Youth Peace Network | | | X |

Source: The YMCA of Greater Vancouver website

Although the YMCA of Greater Vancouver’s services are not exclusively for youth, young people are a major client or customer segment. Some programs for this segment, such as the Youth Peace Network and the Summer Camps, are very distinctive and have achieved high recognition among youths.

The YMCA of Greater Vancouver relies heavily on volunteer networks and partnerships both to implement programs and deliver corresponding services. In 2005, 56,121 participants took part in services and programs, including 1,257 volunteers who contributed 76,616 volunteering hours.⁴

In summary, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver has become one of the Lower Mainland’s most recognized and trusted charities. It fulfills the YMCA’s mission by closely tracking community needs and delivering a range of federal, provincial and

⁴ The YMCA of Greater Vancouver 2005 Annual Report.

municipal government funded programs in the areas of childcare, employment, recreation and community development.

2 CONNECTIONS PROGRAM IN THE YMCA OF GREATER VANCOUVER

2.1 Background to the Bridging Service Sector

In order to support the successful settlement and adaptation of refugees to Canada, the Canadian Federal Government initiated funding for the “Host Program” in 1985. The government initially piloted the program in London, Winnipeg and Regina, followed by programs in Saskatoon, Calgary and Vancouver. By the early 1990s, the “Host Program” had become a permanent program; open to all classes of immigrants.⁵

In 1998, the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada signed the Settlement Renewal Realignment Agreement. Under this agreement, the federal government transfers funds for the delivery of settlement services to the BC government.⁶ Today, the Settlement and Multiculturalism Division of the Ministry of Attorney General has the responsibility to administer and provide funding to all BC Settlement and Adaptation Programs (BCSAP).

The BCSAP consists of five types of service and service support programs. Service and service support programs are divided into categories called “streams”. The Community Bridging Service, sometimes called Bridging Service, is contained in “Stream 2”.

⁵ Community Bridging Program Research Project, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC, March 2003, P8

⁶ Ibid., P8

Stream 1: Information and Support Services

Services include initial needs assessments; orientation to and information about community and government services and systems and Canadian norms; and referral to services.

Stream 2: Community Bridging Services

Services match immigrant and refugee newcomers (individuals [youth and adult] or families) with volunteers from the host society so that they can better understand Canadian life and culture, develop friendships and a sense of connectedness, and learn to access services in the community.

Stream 3: English Learning Services for Adults

English Learning Services for Adults (ELSA) provides English as a second language instruction to adult immigrant newcomers to assist them with their settlement and adaptation to Canadian society.

Stream1/3 Blended: Information, support and English Language Services for Adults

Information, Support & English Language Services for Adults provides multiple-barriered immigrant and refugee newcomers with the support services of Stream 1 and the English language instruction of Stream 3 in a blended format.

Stream 4: Sectoral Support and Delivery Assistance

Sectoral Support and Delivery Assistance provides support to and enhances the delivery of BCSAP services⁷.

2.2 The Connections Program of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver

Specifically, the BC government is responsible for planning, funding, implementing and managing BCSAP. However, in order to deliver the program effectively, it contracts with qualified third-party agencies to execute the program and supervises the service quality on behalf of newcomers. The YMCA of Greater Vancouver is one of the agencies that provides the Community Bridging Services program under Stream 2 of BCSAP. The program is named the Connections Program. The BC government provides a “Logic Model” that includes the expected service inputs, activities and outputs for stream 2 service providers (see Appendix A for details).

⁷ B.C. Settlement and Adaptation Program, Government of British Columbia website: www.ag.gov.bc.ca/sam/bcsap/index.htm

The YMCA of Greater Vancouver successfully secured an 18-month contract to provide Community Bridging Services in the Lower Mainland area in January 2005. In June 2006, the BC government extended the contract to December 2006. The program is free of charge to participating clients and accepts participants year-round.

There are three tiers of services available within the YMCA of Greater Vancouver program offerings:

Tier 1: Adult/Family Matches

This service matches adults-with-adults, couples-with-couples and families-with-families to address settlement needs. The Connections Program targets 100 matches per year.

Tier 2: Youth Buddies

Youth Buddies matches target school-age participants, from 13-18 years old. The Youth Buddies program aims for 100 matches per year.

Tier 3: Leadership Matches

The YMCA offers Leadership Matches that address current immigrant unemployment issues and matches people with business or community leaders. Ideally, these matches pair people with similar work experience or education background. The program targets 50 matches per year.

2.3 Strategic Issues Facing the Connections Program

The BC government is the only sponsor for the Connections Program. Newcomers are not required to pay for services. The BC government cares about service quality as

well as service quantity that is captured by the match numbers. From a funding sponsor's perspective, the government expects agencies to maintain satisfactory service standards and keep operational costs low. Although the Connections Program achieved very positive client satisfaction outcomes in 2005, its match numbers were much lower than its proposed targets. The program only achieved 108 matches from July 2005 to June 2006, whereas the contracted target was 250. Therefore, Connections Program managers are concerned about the BC government's assessment of their output and, consequently, their funding potential for subsequent years. Table 2 illustrates the gap between targeted match numbers and achieved match numbers in three service tiers.

Table 2: Match Number of the Connections Program from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006

| | Contracted Target | Matches Achieved |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Adult/Family | 100 | 87 |
| Youth | 100 | 19 |
| Leadership | 50 | 2 |

Source: The Connections Program Annual Report, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver

The program did not hit the overall target because of inadequate participation. There are a variety of reasons for the lack of participation. In the Adult/Family category, there is an increasing need for additional volunteers. Waitlisted newcomers wait an average of 3 months for a match. It is even harder to solicit volunteers for the Leadership program. One effective way to match people with similar career backgrounds is to collaborate with professional associations and corporations. However, outreach work involves a lot of time and effort and, so far, program staff have not found the time to initiate this. In contrast, in the Youth category, many youth volunteers are highly

motivated to help others but not many youth newcomers have participated. Program managers have been unable to determine exactly what is preventing youth newcomers from joining the program.

In conclusion, program funding may be under threat because of the unsatisfactory match numbers. On one hand, current program staff is busy with every-day operations and do not have enough time to do marketing. On the other hand, given limited funding, it is nearly impossible for the Connections Program to hire an additional full-time outreach worker. Further, the program has not clearly identified the most effective ways to attract more participants.

2.4 Reasons for a Strategic Analysis

Essentially, the Connections Program has two distinct “customers”, the BC government (the “sponsor”) and newcomers (the “clients”). The newcomers are service users and the government is the payer. To satisfy the needs of both, program staff must balance service quality and quantity, decide how to allocate their budget effectively, and assess which activities deserve more effort and time.

This analysis seeks to develop a strategy that provides a direction that will maximize client satisfaction and, at the same time, enhance funding potential. First, overall market trends for the whole immigration settlement service sector are evaluated. Because bridging services are a part of the immigration settlement service sector, a broad and long-term view of the entire sector should help program managers predict future market changes and develop innovative elements in their strategic considerations. Second, the analysis presents a competitive analysis of the Bridging Service sector using

Porter's "Five Forces Model" with some adjustments made to account for the unique competitive aspects of non-profit organizations, most importantly their revenue model.

After the evaluation of the Bridging Service sector, the analysis examines the internal operations of the Connections Program through a value chain analysis. This analysis leads into an assessment of the current strategy. Finally, the analysis proposes and evaluates several strategic alternatives, resulting in a recommended strategy that will best fulfil the Connections Program's goals.

3 HISTORY AND MARKET TRENDS IN IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES

3.1 Settlement Service Customers

Canada is among the world's most generous nations for immigrants. It has, on average, offered residency to about 200,000 immigrants and refugees a year over the past decade.⁸

BCSAP's definition of qualified newcomers includes immigrants and refugees but excludes international students and temporary workers, as the latter are not Permanent Residents of Canada. The Canada Immigration & Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) classifies immigrants by Economic, Business, and Family classes. These classifications are summarized below.

Economic Class:

Skilled workers are in this Class. These immigrants have education, work experience, knowledge of English or French and other abilities that will help them establish themselves successfully as permanent residents in Canada.

Business Class:

Business Class immigrants include investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed persons. They are experienced business people and have demonstrated abilities to support the development of a strong and prosperous Canadian economy.

Family Class:

Family Class immigrants have been sponsored by close relatives or family members who promise to support them for a period of three to 10 years.⁹

⁸ Council on Foreign Relations website:

http://www.cfr.org/publication/11047/canadas_immigration_policy.html

⁹Canada's official source of immigration and citizenship information, Citizenship and Immigration Canada website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/index.html>

Some provinces have Provincial Nomination plans that enable them to select immigrants who wish to settle in their provinces. These plans apply specific selection criteria. Provincial nominees are included in the “Other Immigrants” class. For some purposes, Business Class immigrants are included in the Other Immigrants Class in some statistics, given the relative small proportion of immigrants that they account for.

3.2 The Newcomer Population in Canada

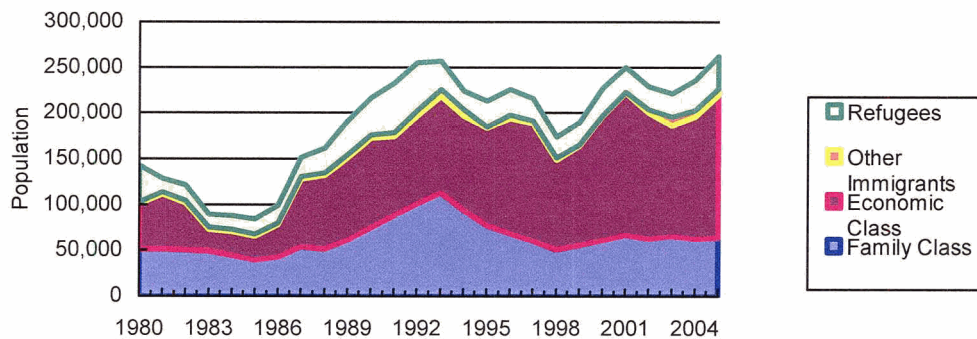
Demographic results show that, between 1991 and 2001, 1.8 million newcomers landed in Canada. 58 percent came from Asia and the Middle East; 20 percent from Europe; 11 percent from Caribbean source countries and Central America; 8 percent from Africa and 3 percent from the USA. ¹⁰

In aggregate, between 1980 and 2005, the population of newcomers to Canada increased from 143,144 to 262,236. As the dominant immigration category, the Economic Class immigrants have contributed 40-50 percent of the total immigrant population since 1990. ¹¹ Figure 1 shows the populations of newcomers by category from 1980 to 2005.

¹⁰ The Challenges for Settlement Professionals under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Canadian Citizenship & Immigration Resource Centre (CCIRC) Inc; Law Offices of Colin R. Singer website: www.immigration.ca/profile-government1.asp

¹¹ Facts and Figures 2005 – Immigration Overview, Canadian Citizenship & Immigration

Figure 1: The Populations of Newcomers by Category (1980-2005)



Source: Facts and Figures 2005 – Immigration Overview, Canadian Citizenship & Immigration

3.3 Immigrants in Greater Vancouver

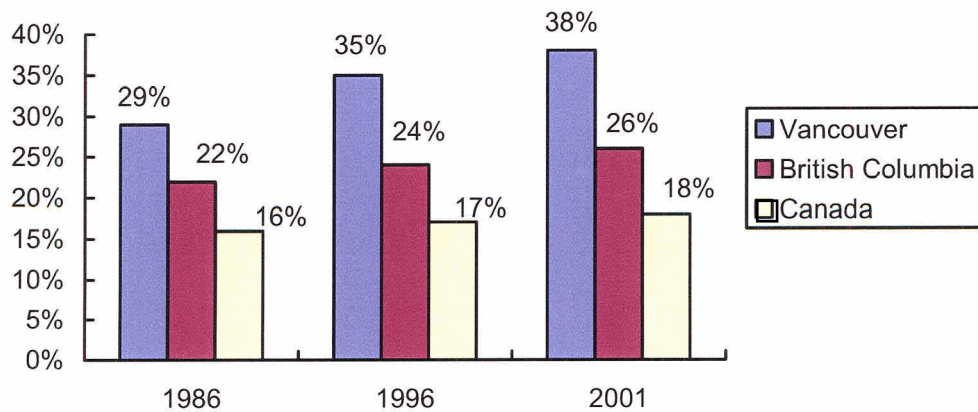
By the end of 2001, Canada’s population was 29,639,040, with immigrants accounting for 39 percent at 5,448,490. Most immigrants live in metropolitan areas such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Montréal.¹²

There were 738, 600 immigrants living in metropolitan Vancouver in 2001. The immigrant share of Vancouver’s population has increased from 1986. In 2001, it reached 38 percent, which is much higher than the proportion of immigrants in the rest of the country.¹³ Figure 2 presents the proportion of immigrant populations in Vancouver, British Columbia and in Canada, in 1986, 1996, and 2001, respectively.

¹² Recent Immigrants in Metropolitan Areas: Profile Based on the 2001 Census, Citizenship and Immigration Canada website: www.cic.gc.ca/english/research/papers/census2001/vancouver/parta.html

¹³ Ibid

Figure 2: Immigrants as a Percentage of the Population, Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada



Source: Recent Immigrants in Metropolitan Areas: Profile Based on the 2001 Census

In Vancouver, very recent immigrants – defined as those who came to Canada between 1996 and 2001 – now number 169,620 and represent 9 percent of the total population. In Canada as a whole, very recent immigrants account for just 3 percent of the population.¹⁴

3.4 Forces that Impact on Settlement Service and Bridging Service Sectors

3.4.1 Immigrant Selection Rules Change

As long as the Canadian Federal Government continues to support a worldwide immigration policy, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) will continue to assist newcomers to settle and develop an increased understanding of Canadian life. However, changes in Immigrant Selection Rules and the corresponding application process could directly affect the settlement service sector.

¹⁴ *ibid*

The overall immigration application entails a lengthy processing period. Between 1998 and 2002, the number of pending immigration applications increased dramatically, resulting in extensive processing delays. In June 2002, 700,000 applications were pending worldwide. The processing period in Beijing was 7-10 years; in New Delhi, 5 years; in Hong Kong, 4 years; and in Buffalo, 2 years.¹⁵

After June 2002, CIC adopted new immigrant selection rules that are intended to reduce pending applications, speed-up processing efficiency and eventually deliver 250,000 annual admissions to Canada. The IRPA's the new selection rules are designed, in part, to facilitate the processing of a large number of applications.¹⁶ The new rules give preference to applicants with proficiency in the two official languages, superior education, more than four years of work experience, previous ties to Canada and good family ties in Canada. Some key changes to the rules for Economic Class immigrants are as follows:

1. Applicants with prior ties to Canada, including previous study or work experience in Canada, can gain points. The change benefits current international students, workers and other temporary residents.
2. Immigrants are assessed on the basis of extensive, meaningful skill sets, rather than on an occupation-driven selection model. Applicants, such as engineers and computer technicians, who previously received favourable occupational scores no longer get priority over others.

¹⁵ The Challenges for Settlement Professionals under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Canadian Citizenship & Immigration Resource Centre (CCIRC) Inc; Law Offices of Colin R. Singer website: www.immigration.ca/profile-government1.asp

¹⁶ Ibid.

3. There is increased emphasis on official language ability, both English and French. Whereas the old rules allocated 15 out of 70 (pass mark) points to language ability, the new policy raised the allocation to 24 out of 67.
4. As well, the new rules favour applicants with stronger family ties by assigning marks to applicants whose spouses have higher education backgrounds. The old rules did not take spouses' qualification in to consideration.¹⁷

Under the new rules, Economic Class immigrants should have stronger settlement capability than under the previous rules, as they are likely to have better language skills, higher education background and may have some work or study experience in Canada. If the proportion of Economic Class immigrants increases, the demand for settlement services would drop. For example, English learning services for adults would be less necessary since many new immigrants might consider it too basic. Information and support services would be less in demand too as competent new immigrants would be more likely to be able to obtain relevant information by searching the internet or from other sources. The new rules may also affect bridging services because immigrants who had studied or worked in Canada would have established networks and would be able to connect to Canadian communities and services in various non-institutional ways, such as attending alumni events or communicating with colleagues. In addition, a well-educated spouse is more likely to be able to successfully support the family's settlement. Consequently, the overall settlement service market for Economic Class immigrants would shrink under the new immigrant selection rules.

¹⁷Immigrant to Canada as a skilled worker, Citizenship and Immigration Canada website <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/skilled/index.html>

According to the CIC's website, the current global processing time for an Economic Class application has not been shortened to a great extent. For example, 80 percent of cases were finalized in 63 months in Beijing, in 69 months in New Delhi and in 61 months in Manila.¹⁸

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that many visa offices are still working on pending cases and that the most recent newcomers applied under the old selection rules. Large numbers of Economic Class immigrants accepted under the new rules are expected to land in Canada after 2008.

The selection rules for the Family Class and Business Class immigrants remain almost unchanged. Refugees' settlement capability is not indicated by their qualifications but by their living situations with regard to humanitarian protection.

In conclusion, the new selection rules could negatively affect the settlement service market after 2008 but the extent of the negative impact will not be great because a large number of non-Economic Class immigrants and refugees will still require and seek assistance. As well, Economic Class immigrants might still need certain types of services to assist better settlement.

3.4.2 Provincial Nomination and Social Welfare

The newcomer population in BC might drop if other provinces adopt attractive Provincial Nomination plans or more generous social welfare services to attract immigrants. For example, if provinces, other than BC, attract newcomers by providing

¹⁸ Statistical Information: Applications Processed at Canadian Visa Offices: Citizenship and Immigration Canada website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/times-int/02a-skilled-fed.html>

programs to subsidize real estate purchases or by offering higher allowances for education, newcomers might choose a province other than BC. For example, Quebec's French language education allowances have motivated many newcomers to move there.

However, Vancouver will continue to be a popular destination for newcomers. CBC news reported that by 2017, about one-half of the people living in Toronto and Vancouver would belong to a visible minority.¹⁹ Vancouver is a preferred destination for immigrants because of its favourable climate, convenient international transportation system and mature multi-cultural mosaic.

Thus, compared to other provinces, it is less likely that provincial policy changes would affect the BC settlement service market.

3.4.3 Economic Growth and Employment Rate

The settlement service market in a particular area tightly connects with that area's economic performance and employment rate.

High economic growth and employment rates encourage newcomers. For example, over the past few years, many newcomers have located or relocated to Alberta because of Alberta's outstanding economic performance and increasing employment rate. Settlement services in Alberta have been increasingly in demand as well.

The TD Bank's Provincial Economics Forecast stated that BC's growing exports to Asia, increasing non-residential investment and stimulative government fiscal policy will

¹⁹ Immigration in Canada-Projecting into the future-from CBC news online, March 22, 2005, Vancouver English Centre website: <http://secure.vec.bc.ca/immigration-projections.cfm>

sustain a strong economy through the end of the decade.²⁰ Thus, newcomers will have more working opportunities and, therefore, be more willing to settle in BC, predicting a positive future for the settlement service market in BC.

3.4.4 Culture-Learning Needs

As immigrants play increasingly important roles in Canadian society, learning how to work effectively in cross-cultural teams will be vital for both immigrants and non-immigrants. Presently many companies require employees to have strong multicultural teamwork skills. It is reasonable to predict that the number of programs that support multicultural understanding will increase, in both the corporate and service sectors. The Bridging Service sector is well positioned to satisfy this potential growing demand. Although other settlement services could provide some culture learning opportunities, they cannot compete with one-to-one based conversations and activities.

An increasing demand for multi-cultural and cross-cultural education is a good driver for the Bridging Service sector.

3.5 Prospects for the Next Decade

CIC's annual admission target of twenty-five thousand immigrants suggests a stable and promising settlement service market. A booming Vancouver immigrant population is excellent news for service providers in Vancouver.

The overall market might shrink slightly due to the stronger settlement capabilities of Economic Class immigrants. However, service demands from other classes of

²⁰ Provincial Economic Forecast: TD Bank Financial Group website:
<http://www.td.com/economics/qef/prov0906.jsp>

immigrants and refugees will remain constant. Vancouver will still be a popular destination for newcomers, even though other provinces might offer better social welfare services or attractive Provincial Nomination plans. BC's expected promising economic performance will strengthen newcomers' motivations to settle there. Education programs that explore Canadian culture and multi-cultural social and work environments are a potential driver for the Bridging Service sector. All these factors will contribute to stability in the Bridging Service sector in the next decade.

4 COMPETITIVE FORCES IN THE BRIDGING SERVICE SECTOR

This section addresses six competitive forces that impinge on the Bridging Service sector. The “Five Forces Model” is used to provide insight into the sector’s competitive dynamics.²¹ “Government regulatory authority” is an additional dimension in this competition set.²² “Existing competitors” are those that compete for government funding. “New entrants” are other for-profits or non-profits that have the resources to potentially offer these services, but have not provided bridging services. Other types of settlement services are “substitutes” for bridging services. Both newcomers and the BC government are “buyers”, while volunteers and employees are key “suppliers” to the sector.

4.1 Existing Competitors in the Bridging Service Sector

Competition in the non-profit world is different from the for-profit world. Most people working in NPOs are concerned about co-development initiatives for the whole community. Organizations do not want to gain an advantage over other non-profit organizations. However, a contradiction exists. On one hand, NPOs have to compete for limited resources, such as grants and volunteers. On the other hand, as community-minded organizations, they do not want to hurt other organizations’ ability to deliver comparable services.

²¹ Michael E. Porter, *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*, The Free Press, 1980, P3

²² Anthony E. Boardman and Aidan R. Vining, *A Framework for comprehensive Strategic Analysis*, 2003

A successful “competitor” not only secures immediate resources, but also, in longer term, gains competence and the ability to attract a wide range of additional resources and an enhanced reputation in the opinion of governments, donors, members, customers, volunteers and the media.²³ For example, when an NPO bids on a Request for Proposal (RFP), a history of successful programs and extensive experience will significantly help it obtain a new contract. Further, people prefer to volunteer for, or work with, a highly recognized NPO where they gain experience that would strengthen their resumes. Therefore, some degree of competition in the non-profit sector is inevitable.

However, there are factors that dampen the competitive field. All players are guided and restricted by their organizations’ operating policies and mission statements. They are also constrained by general ethical rules that are common in the non-profit world.

4.1.1 Competitor Analysis

Competitor analysis in the Bridging Service sector addresses how many NPOs serve the same customer needs presently, and how many other organizations have the resources and ability to potentially provide comparable services. Bergen and Peteraf classify competitors into three levels: direct competitors, indirect competitors and potential competitors, based on the degree of market commonality and resource similarity.²⁴ The following analysis identifies these three types of competitors in the Bridging Service sector.

²³ David La Piana with Michaela Hayes, *Play to Win: The Nonprofit Guide to Competitive Strategy*, (Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint, 2005), P34.

²⁴ Mark Bergen and Margaret A. Peteraf, *Competitor Identification and Competitor Analysis: A Broad-Based Managerial Approach*, *Managerial and Decision Economics*, (23) 2002: 157-162

Direct competitors for the YMCA of Greater Vancouver are those NPOs that achieve high scores in terms of both market commonality and resource similarity. These direct competitors provide bridging services to newcomers and have similar resources, such as volunteer hosts and government funding. Therefore, the NPOs under BCSAP stream 2 are direct competitors. There are 13 NPOs in this category. Eight of them serve newcomers in Greater Vancouver. However, most of these eight direct competitors provide only one type of bridging service, focusing on either the Adult/Family or Youth tier. The United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society (SUCCESS) offers two tiers of services: Adult/Family and Leadership. The YMCA of Greater Vancouver is the only organization that provides all three tiers of services: Adult/Family, Youth and Leadership.

Table 3 illustrates these eight organizations' focused service areas, using data drawn from the government's list of funded agencies and from interviews with program staff.

Table 3: Major Bridging Service Providers in Greater Vancouver

A: Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA)

B: Multilingual Orientation Services Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC)

C: Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSBC)

D: United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society (SUCCESS)

E: Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society (SDISS)

F: Members of Association of Neighbourhood Houses of Greater Vancouver (ANH)

G: North Shore Multicultural Society

H: Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth & Family

I: Ray-Cam Co-operative Association Consortium Bid

| | Vancouver | Burnaby | Richmond | Surrey | Tri-Cities | New Westminster | North Van |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------|----------|--------|------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Adult | A, B, C | A, B, C, D | D | A | D | B, D | G |
| Youth | A, F, I | A | | A, E | | H | |
| Leadership | A | A | D | A | D | | |

Source: Minister of Attorney General Website: <http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/sam/bcsap/pdf/results.pdf>

The BC Government evaluates program proposals and, if applicable, previous contract performance to determine future funding distributions. To provide equitable support for newcomers living in different areas of the province, the government tries to balance funding allocations by specifying contractors’ service areas. The government’s list of funded agencies clearly specifies everyone’s major service area.²⁵ However, many people living in Greater Vancouver are not limited to receiving service in one specific

²⁵ Summary of Results for First and Second Request for Proposal Process for BC Settlement and Adaptation Program Contracts, Minister of Attorney General Website: <http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/sam/bcsap/pdf/results.pdf>

area. In addition, in order to meet contracted match numbers, most organizations currently deliver their services to more inclusive areas. For example, the Multilingual Orientation Services Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC) stated that it mainly focuses on Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminister, but also serves other areas if there is a demand. However, on the government's list, MOSAIC shows up in Vancouver only. Therefore, the listed areas denote focus, not exclusivity. In short, most competitors compete with each other in all locations.

The YMCA's major direct competitors in the Adults/Family tier are MOSAIC, the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSBC), and the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society (SUCCESS). As mainstream immigration-focused NPOs, these three organizations have been running bridging service programs for many years. The following background information provides an overview of their organizations and program performances.

1. ISSBC

ISSBC was incorporated in 1972 as the first immigrant-serving agency in the province. Since that time, ISSBC has grown to be the largest, multicultural, immigrant-serving agency in western Canada. The society provides a variety of services to Lower Mainland immigrant and refugee communities and works with over 23,000 clients per year.²⁶

ISSBC named its bridging service program the "Friendship Hosts Program". The program provides adult matching services but welcomes junior college students as

²⁶ ISSBC website: http://www.issbc.org/about_us/overview.htm

volunteers. ISSBC has a great immigrant-focused brand image. Many newcomers regard ISSBC as the first place to seek help. Similarly, because of its reputation, volunteers, who would like to help newcomers, are more likely to choose ISSBC. ISSBC serves a large number of newcomers from all over Greater Vancouver and accomplishes around 250 matches every year. Their match number is larger than that of all other service providers.

2. MOSAIC

MOSAIC is a multilingual NPO established in 1976. It is dedicated to addressing issues that affect immigrants and refugees in the course of their settlement and integration into Canadian society. MOSAIC assists immigrants by providing employment-consulting services, offering language trainings and arranging settlement workshops.²⁷

MOSAIC's bridging service offering is called the "Kindness Club Host Program", a name designed to attract warm-hearted volunteer hosts. The program manager, who has managed the program from its inception, has extensive experience motivating volunteers and newcomers. However, MOSAIC's match number is not high, probably because of poor program promotion.

3. SUCCESS

SUCCESS was founded in 1973. SUCCESS is now one of the largest immigration and social service agencies in British Columbia. Its mandate is to promote the well-being of Canadians and immigrants and to encourage their involvement in the community.²⁸

²⁷ MOSAIC website: http://www.mosaicbc.com/about_us.asp

²⁸ SUCCESS website: <http://www.success.bc.ca/eng/location/pender/index.html>

SUCCESS serves mainly East Asian immigrants, especially Chinese immigrants. Twenty-nine percent of very recent immigrants are from China, including Hong Kong. The next largest source nation is Taiwan, which supplied 13 percent of very recent immigrants.²⁹ SUCCESS effectively targets these niche markets and has achieved a good reputation in Chinese communities, resulting in significant word-of-mouth referrals. SUCCESS also distributes information about its programs at the Vancouver International Airport. The programs run by SUCCESS vary from youth summer activities to senior health services, from employment training to language translation. Guest speakers regularly present immigration settlement seminars with topics covering customs regulations, small business operations and cultural issues, etc.

SUCCESS's Richmond and Tri-city offices provide bridging services for the Adult/Family tier through their Host Program. SUCCESS has an advantage over other providers in Richmond because of the large Chinese community in Richmond. Although the definition of "Tri-City" in BCSAP does not include Burnaby and New Westminster, SUCCESS also serves these areas. SUCCESS matches 100 pairs in the Adult/Family tier a year.

Compared with the Adult/Family tier, competition in Youth and Leadership tiers are less intensive. The major competitors in the Youth tier are the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and the Surrey Delta Immigrant Service Society.

²⁹ Recent Immigrants in Metropolitan Areas – Vancouver, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, April 2005, P22, Citizenship and Immigration Canada website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/research-stats/2001-vancouver.pdf>

4. Collingwood Neighbourhood House and South Vancouver Neighbourhood House

The Collingwood Neighbourhood House and the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House are both members of the Association of Neighbourhood Houses in Greater Vancouver (ANH). ANH is an umbrella organization that serves seven locally-based Neighbourhood Houses. The organization offers more than 300 programs and services from childcare to family resources, to support for youths and seniors.³⁰ ANH is highly recognized by locals, as it has seven convenient locations in Greater Vancouver and actively participates in community activities.

Although ANH is not an immigrant-focused organization, it has run settlement service programs for many years. Its “Culture Buddy Program” provides youth match services in Vancouver. The South Vancouver Neighbourhood House cooperates closely with Fleming Elementary and David Thompson Secondary schools to provide on-site and off-site activities for youth matches.³¹ These two schools recruit and refer around 30 youth newcomers every year. The Collingwood Neighbourhood House trains older teens in youth work and tutoring skills so that they can help younger immigrant teens adjust to their new environment. For example, students in grades 10 to 12 assist elementary school students.³² Most participants come from school referrals and direct campus promotions, undertaken by the program coordinator.

³⁰ Association of Neighbourhood House of Greater Vancouver website: <http://www.anhgv.org/>

³¹ South Vancouver Neighbourhood House website: <http://www.southvan.org/youth.html>

³² Collingwood Neighbourhood House website: <http://www.cnh.bc.ca/youthservices.htm>

5. Surrey Delta Immigrant Service Society (SDISS)

SDISS offers a wide range of services and programs to newcomer communities in Surrey, Delta, White Rock and Langley. SDISS is very neighbourhood-friendly. Most of its programs target local people and it maintains close relationships with community organizations and agencies.³³

SDISS's "Youth Buddy Program" targets all ethnic youths between 15 and 25 years old. SDISS is a major competitor for the YMCA of Greater Vancouver because Surrey is one of the Connections Program's focus areas. No other competitors operate in Surrey at present.

The only competitor in the Leadership tier is the Mentoring Program provided by SUCCESS's Richmond office. Compared to its Host Program, the Mentoring Program is relatively new. Although the program has attained a few successful matches, it is struggling to increase match numbers.

The preceding analysis addressed direct competitors by three identified serve tiers as separate entities. However, it is possible that existing competitors in one tier could potentially compete in other tiers. For example, MOSAIC and ISSBC could initiate youth programs. It is possible that SDISS will expand services to the adult match tier. These competitors are not new entrants to the Bridging Service sector, but they would constitute threats to the YMCA of Greater Vancouver, which, currently, is eligible to provide all three tiers of services.

³³ Surrey Delta Immigrant Service Society website: <http://www.sdiss.org>

Organizations, with resource endowments similar to the YMCA of Greater Vancouver, that do not presently serve the same customer needs are potential competitors.³⁴ With regard to bridging services, NPOs that have similar service experience, volunteer involvement capabilities and reputations are very likely to become competitors. These would include organizations such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Canada.

Organizations that serve newcomers' needs, but with different types of resources, are indirect competitors.³⁵ These would include current NPOs that operate within BCSAP stream 1, stream 3, stream1/3 blended, as well as other for-profit service providers. These organizations provide substitute services to newcomers and may become new entrants in the future. Section 4.3 will analyze these competitors in detail.

4.1.2 Cost vs. Differentiation

Most competitors, in a broad range of industry segments, seek competitive advantages through cost leadership or through differentiation strategies.³⁶ However, in the Bridging Service sector, especially for the Adult/Family tier, differentiation is not easy as most programs have similar service content, as well as similar procedures and workflows. The service "Logic Model" provided by the BC government mandates standardized service activities that contractors must follow. Further, NPOs typically have tight budgets for promotion. It is hard for them to convey their distinctive service attributes or advantages to newcomers. In addition, it is nearly impossible for service

³⁴ Mark Bergen and Magaret A. Peteraf, *Competitor Identification and Competitor Analysis: A Broad-Based Managerial Approach*, *Managerial and Decision Economics*, (23) 2002:157-162

³⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶ Michael E. Porter, *Competitive Advantage - Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*, The Free Press, New York, 1985, P11

providers to differentiate themselves on tangible dimensions. As well, newcomers are not able to evaluate service quality before they experienced it. For example, it is hard for a newcomer to understand or assess the benefits of joining the Kindness Club Host Program or the Connections Program before he/she participates. Thus, recruiting adult newcomers by differentiating service is difficult.

For the youth programs, differentiation factors are relatively easy to observe due to distinctive volunteer resources, pre-arranged match activities and different school participation. For example, some programs focus on the “Mentoring Concept” and match younger newcomers with older host volunteers, while some match participants of similar ages. Some programs recruit participants from specific cooperating schools, whereas others do not. Moreover, as youth participants, especially youth volunteers, demand more instruction and attention than adult volunteers do, program coordinators have to devote a large amount of time and effort to tutoring and supervising match activities. Consequently, the youth programs of different NPOs are quite diverse.

The government differentiates between NPOs on the basis of their customer satisfaction levels, reputations and focused service areas. An NPO having distinctive advantages in these areas would generate favourable consideration. Customer satisfaction is the most important differentiation factor; it is measured by BCSAP Client Satisfaction Survey results and quarterly reports.

The BC Government, a real “customer” because it purchases bridging services for newcomers, is very concerned with cost. The government benchmarks cost by how many successful matches are achieved, how many participants are assessed, and how often

activities occur within certain specified periods. Match number is the most important indicator of cost efficiency. Therefore, how to spend money effectively to generate high match volume is a priority for contractors, some of whom utilize economies of scope in marketing and operations. Marketing groups of similar services together, or serving a numbers of participants at the same time, can result in a lower average cost for each match.

4.1.3 Conclusions on The Existing Competitive Situation

The YMCA of Greater Vancouver competes with mainstream immigrant-focused NPOs for government contracts. Because there are only eight direct competitors in the Greater Vancouver area, competitive intensity is relatively low. However, as the BC government has limited funding available, competitors do try to win resources by a variety of means. They recruit participants across areas and promote programs in a wide variety of ways. These activities increase the competitive intensity. Competition in the Youth tier is not as intense as in the Adult/Family tier, primarily because there are fewer competitors. Cooperation with local schools additionally restricts service areas for youth programs. There is almost no competition in the Leadership tier at this moment, since only two service providers operate in the entire Greater Vancouver area and they rarely promote their programs.

It is very difficult for newcomers to differentiate among adult/family programs, but youth programs can be differentiated on several factors. The BC Government differentiates contractors chiefly by newcomer satisfaction level. As cost is an important

assessment consideration for the BC government, economies of scope exist in marketing and operations.

In conclusion, the overall existing competitors results in a “Medium-Low” competitive situation in the Bridging Service sector.

4.2 Threats of Substitute Services

Substitute services deliver similar outcomes to the same customers. Settlement services under stream 1, stream 3 and stream1/3 blended are substitutes for overall bridging services. Other services may replace one or two tiers of bridging services. The following sections address these substitutes.

4.2.1 Substitutes for the Overall Bridging Service Programs

1. Information and Support Services (BCSAP Stream 1)

In most cases, settlement workers employed by the NPO provide information and support services. The services are often available in the newcomer’s first language. For newcomers who have strong self-settlement capability, these services are adequate. Newcomers with strong self-settlement capability are able to approach new friends, explore Canadian culture and identify their career paths independently. They do not necessarily need bridging services. In addition, information and support services are relatively flexible with regard to time commitments and are offered directly by professional staff. Because time availability is always a consideration, newcomers may prefer to choose information and support services rather than bridging services.

2. English Learning Services for Adults(ELSA) (BCSAP Stream 3)

ELSA is a competitive substitute for bridging services. Most people consider improving English language skills to be the primary reason for joining a bridging service program. The Canadian Federal Government and ELSA providers have been advocating the services for several decades. Newcomers with less proficient English are more likely to attend ELSA, rather than bridging service programs. However, ELSA offers basic-to-intermediate levels of English training and does not have advanced classes.

4.2.2 Substitutes for the Adult/Family Tier of Bridging Services

Adults joining bridging service programs normally have three major motivations: to practice English, to learn about Canadian culture and to build friendships. Activities that satisfy these motivations are substitute services. Besides attending ELSA, adults with relatively higher proficiency in English can pay tuition fees for English classes that offer higher-level training for ESL students. Studying at private English language schools, taking ESL courses offered by post-secondary colleges and joining conversation clubs are all substitutes. To learn about Canadian culture, participating in culture seminars and community activities, and work-related networking are good alternatives. Several approaches can facilitate building friendships, such as surfing the Internet, joining social clubs and being introduced by existing friends.

4.2.3 Substitutes for the Youth Tier of Bridge Services

All kinds of on-site and off-site school activities can be regarded as substitutes that help youth newcomers adapt to Canadian life. It is far easier for youth newcomers to make new friends, learn Canadian culture and improve their English as they interact with

teachers and classmates every day. For young people, the substitutes are studying at school, making friends with classmates, participating in summer camps and community activities, etc.

4.2.4 Substitutes for the Leadership Tier of Bridging Services

Leadership-tier customers overlap somewhat with Adult/Family-tier customers. Most adult newcomers face employment challenges, in addition to settlement problems. In the Connections Program, most newcomers apply to participate in both tiers of services. For leadership program applicants, employment concerns are central. They look for programs that will provide them with career development guidance.

Employment-oriented organizations, either non-profits or for-profits, are substitutes for the Leadership tier. They provide professional “job search” and consulting services. Although volunteer hosts could share some personal experiences and insights, employment-focused training programs in NPOs such as the “Job Finding Club” are able to offer highly professional classes, seminars and referral resources. These programs are more straightforward and effective for job seekers. Therefore, employment services are competitive substitutes for Leadership-tier services.

4.2.5 Conclusions on Substitute Threat

Although most settlement services offered by NPOs are free, newcomers with limited time can only select those one or two that best address their needs. Compared with other service programs, bridging service programs require greater time commitments. Substitutes might attract newcomers with time flexibility. In addition, narrower-focused substitutes are able to provide services that are more professional and

better satisfy specific needs. However, bridging service is a unique settlement service that satisfies multiple objectives simultaneously. No other type of settlement service has comparable competitive advantages.

In summary, the force of substitutes' in influencing the competitive situation in the Bridging Service sector is "Medium".

4.3 Threats of New Entrants

New entrants to the Bridging Service sector are potential contractors under BCSAP stream 2. It is unlikely that private organizations will provide similar services in the future. Neither is it possible that NPOs without government contracts will compete in the market.

Two factors determine entry possibilities. First, a potential competitor must have sufficient resources to provide bridging service programs. Second, a new entrant must compete successfully for government contracts. Accessibility to government contracts and entry costs are the most important barriers to entry.

4.3.1 Government Barriers

The BC government contracts with only a few organizations, as there are limited funds available. Therefore, although new participants might replace older ones, the number of successful contractors would remain stable.

It is not easy for non-immigrant-focused NPOs to get contracts because the government restricts applicants on the basis of their available resources and relevant experience. The government prefers mainstream immigration service providers. However,

comprehensive organizations with comparable resources and an outstanding brand image, such as the YWCA, would be competitive.

4.3.2 Economics of Scope and Entry Cost

NPOs that have been in other BCSAP streams are more likely to join the competition for Bridging Service funding. They have existing newcomer bases, immigration service reputations and relevant experience. More importantly, they have established relationships with the BC government. For agencies that have participated in other BCSAP streams, the cost of entering the Bridging Service sector is relatively low. For example, they would have lower employee training costs, because their current employees have some settlement service expertise. As match activities are mostly executed off-site, there would be little, if any, additional facility costs. Moreover, they can take advantage of economies of scope to lower overall operational costs, including sharing marketing expenses and arranging group activities for all newcomers. A group of settlement services could form a strategic group that would serve the same customers more efficiently. Table 4 lists current major service providers under BCSAP and their focused service areas.

Table 4: Current Major BCSAP Contracted Service Providers

A: Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA)

B: Multilingual Orientation Services Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC)

C: Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSBC)

D: United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society (SUCCESS)

E: Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society (SDISS)

F: Association of Neighbourhood House of Greater Vancouver (ANH)

G: North Shore Multicultural Society

H: Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth & Family

I: Ray-Cam Co-operative Association Consortium Bid

J: Jewish Family Service Agency of Vancouver (JFSA)

K: Pacific Immigration Resource Society (PIRS)

| | Vancouver | Burnaby | Richmond | Surrey | Tri-Cities. | New Westminster | North -Van |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------|--------|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| Stream 1 | B, C, D, F, J | B, C, D, F, J | C, D, J | D, E | C | B, C, D, F, J | G |
| Stream2-Adult | A, B, C | A, B, C, D | D | A | D | B, D | G |
| Stream2-Youth | A, F, I | A | | A, E | | H | |
| Stream 2 -Leadership | A | A | D | A | D | | |
| Stream3 | B, D, C, F, K | B, D, C, F, K | C, D | E, D | B, D | B, D, C, F, K | B |
| Stream 1/3 blended | E, K | E, K | E, K | E, K | E, K | E, K | G |

Among bridging service providers, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver is the only one that does not provide other streams of settlement services. However, its direct

competitors, such as ISSBC, MOSAIC, SUCCESS and ANH, do compete in several arenas. The Pacific Immigration Resource Society (PIRS) and the Jewish Family Service Agency of Vancouver (JFSA) are currently staying out of the Bridging Service sector, but are likely to become entrants in the near future.

NPOs, such as PIRS and JFSA, would be able to maximize economies of scope by entering the Bridging Service sector. In addition, internal referrals would lead to higher service volumes and superior contract performance. Consequently, PIRS and JFSA might add bridging services to their existing services and position themselves as leading settlement service providers similar to ISSBC and MOSAIC.

In conclusion, because access to government funding is difficult, entering BCSAP as a new service supplier is not easy, but expanding services from other streams to stream 2 is very possible due to low entry cost and economies of scope. As long as service providers in other streams demonstrate their competency and present reasonable proposals, the BC government may consider their applications positively. However, there are only a few potential new entrants at present. Therefore, the threat of new entrants is “Medium-Low”.

4.4 Bargaining Power of Suppliers – Employees and Volunteers

In the Bridging Service sector, manpower, including employees and volunteer labour input, is a key supply factor. There is little material input in this sector.

4.4.1 Employee Power

In addition to the general requirements for non-profit employees, people who work in the Bridging Service sector should have exceptional interpersonal skills to effectively interact and communicate with newcomers, especially with those whose first language is not English. International experience and a second language are assets. Furthermore, program staff should have strong volunteer management skills. Volunteer recruitment, training and mentoring are ongoing challenges for program staff. Although volunteer management expertise is necessary for every NPO employee, the skill set requirements for bridging service staff are particularly high. For example, an outreach worker must have sales and marketing expertise, understand the NPO's operational procedures and, ideally, have settlement service experience.

Generally, a well-trained and responsible employee can do a good job in the Bridging Service sector. A good attitude and professional working manner are the most important factors. In the non-profit human resources market, qualified employees are not difficult to find. However, employees' bargaining power increases because settlement service experience and volunteer management skills are not easy to acquire.

4.4.2 Volunteer Power

Recruiting and retaining volunteers is the biggest issue for the Bridging Service sector. In Greater Vancouver, bridging service programs work very hard to recruit volunteers, especially for adult and leadership programs.³⁷ Several factors contribute to the problem:

³⁷ Community Bridging Program Research Project, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC, March 2003, P25

1. Volunteer hosts should have lived in Canada for several years. At minimum, they must be confident enough to share their understanding of Canadian culture with newcomers. This eliminates many less Canadian-experienced volunteers.
2. Newcomers prefer to match volunteers with similar backgrounds and ages, which is not easy. From the YMCA of Greater Vancouver's statistics, it is evident that more than 70 percent of participating newcomers are 35-44 years old, whereas most volunteers are younger than 25. Some college/university students would like to accumulate volunteer experience, but they are generally much younger than most newcomers.
3. In a survey conducted by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 80 percent of non-volunteers 25-34 years old considered "don't have the time" as the major volunteering barrier. Seventy-eight percent of non-volunteers 35-44 years old also cited lack of time as their primary reason for not participating. Thirty-eight percent of non-volunteers chose to donate or become members of the service organization as alternatives to fulfil their social responsibilities.³⁸ Most bridging service programs require a 6-month time commitment, which is a high barrier for busy potential volunteers.
4. There is no switching cost for volunteers. They can choose any NPO and any type of volunteer job. Benefits from volunteering are hard to measure, since it largely depends on personal perspectives.

It is most difficult to recruit volunteers to work in Leadership tier programs as volunteers of approximately the same age and with the same background as the

³⁸ Understanding Canadian Volunteers- National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP), Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004

newcomers are preferred. Currently, Economic Class immigrants account for 45 percent of the customer base³⁹ and their backgrounds are primarily in Computer Science and Engineering. Local computer technicians and engineers are usually extremely busy with work and are reluctant to make time commitments.

For youth programs, volunteer bargaining power is relatively low, since youth volunteers do not have as many concerns about time commitments and prefer to choose the volunteer job that is the most enjoyable. Most youth volunteers admitted that they like to make new friends and have a “fun job”.

In conclusion, bridging services are a special settlement service that heavily relies on volunteer participation. Although many people are qualified to become volunteers, they must be willing to contribute their valuable time and energy. Moreover, it is preferable that they have a similar background and are in the same age bracket as clients. The bargaining power of adult volunteers is very high, while it is only medium for youth volunteers. Overall supplier power, combining employee and volunteer power, is “Medium-High”.

4.5 Bargaining Power of Clients - Newcomers and the BC Government

Both newcomers and the BC government exercise client power. While newcomers are service users, the BC government is the actual buyer.

³⁹ 2005 BCSAP Outcomes and Client Satisfaction Survey (Stream 2), Ministry of Attorney General Settlement and Multiculturalism Division.

4.5.1 Newcomer Client Power

Newcomers are eligible to accept bridging services without charge. Most newcomers appreciate the opportunity. Although there are no switching costs, newcomers rarely compare, or change, programs. There are two reasons. Firstly, in the adult-tier service, newcomers are usually not in a position to be able to distinguish which program is better, so they seldom “bargain”. Further, only eight NPOs offer bridging services across the Greater Vancouver region, many of which have only one or two offices. Thus, newcomers are more likely to choose the one closest to them, without any explicit comparison. Currently, all major service providers have lengthy waitlists for adult newcomers, indicating relatively low newcomer bargaining power.

However, the youth market is different. Youth newcomer participants are hard to recruit due to many available substitutes and some concerns that immigrant parents might have. At present, there are many youth volunteers on the waitlist, but no newcomers. Therefore, youth newcomers have higher bargaining power than adult newcomers.

There is a high demand for leadership matches. The benefits of a leadership match include all the benefits of an adult match as well as the benefits of employment mentoring. Most adult newcomers are looking for career-related advice and want to maximize benefits from the program they select. However, leadership volunteers are difficult to recruit. Therefore, newcomer bargaining power in the Leadership tier is very weak.

Although overall newcomer bargaining power is low, they can influence government funding decisions by the opinions they express on the BCSAP Client

Satisfaction Survey. Therefore, newcomers' bargaining power increases from "Low" to "Medium".

4.5.2 BC Government Client Power

The BC Government is the exclusive revenue resource for the Bridging Service sector. Contractors have to report regularly on their performance in terms of match numbers, assessed participant numbers and group activities. The BC government evaluates contractors and decides to renew or discontinue contracts by benchmarking their performances. The government has extremely high power by virtue of their control of funding.

In conclusion, the overall client power of the Bridging Service sector is "Medium-High".

4.6 Government Power

Section 3.4.1 explained that immigration policy changes affect newcomers' volume and their settlement capability, which, in turn, influence the Bridging Service market. More newcomers to Canada means their bargaining power will become weaker and the service market will become less competitive. As well, more competent newcomers (for example, those with good English skills) might also cause the market to shrink. Further, the Canadian Federal Government determines the total grant to provinces of funds allocated to the Bridging Service sector, which directly influences competition among service providers. If grant allocation increases, competition will decrease.

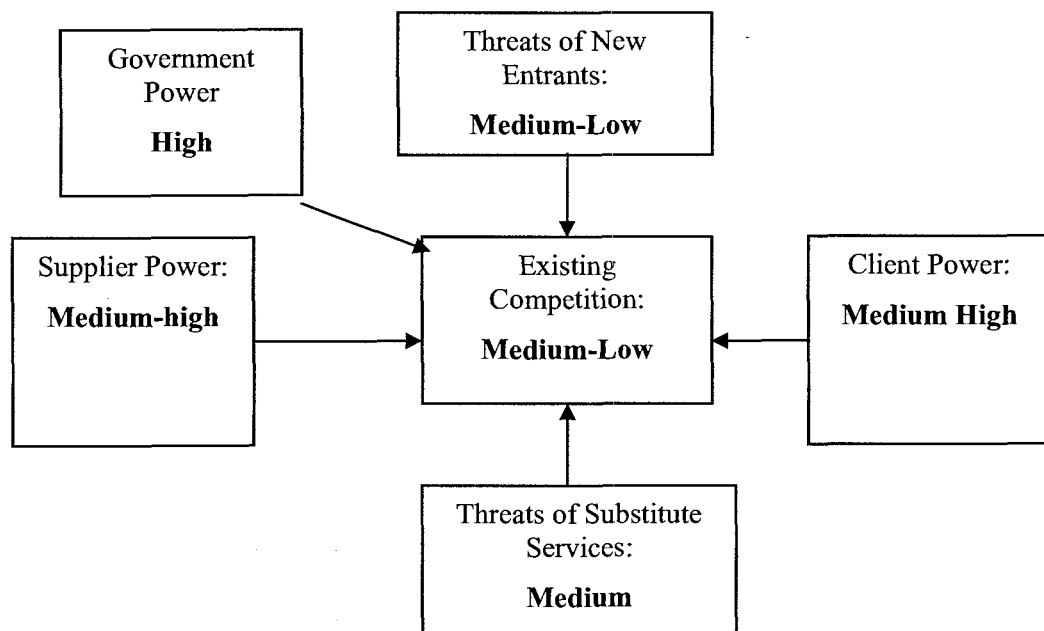
The BC government has not only high bargaining power as a client, but also as a regulator. It can control competition by adjusting contract requirements. For example, if the BC government demands that proponents have over five years of settlement service experience, some potential entrants will be excluded. The BC government can alter competition intensity.

Therefore, government power in the Bridging Service sector is high. However, there is no sign that either the federal or the provincial government intends to change their regulations in the near future. Provincial and federal support for the sector appears to be stable.

4.7 A Summary of Competitive Forces in the Bridging Service Sector

Figure 3 summarizes the competitive forces in the Bridging Service sector, as discussed in sections 4.1-4.6.

Figure 3: Competitive Forces of the Bridging Service Sector



In conclusion, there are few competitors in the Bridging Service sector in Greater Vancouver. However, limited government funding and contract pressures do heighten competition. Competition in youth and leadership programs is much less intense than in adult programs. Substitute services are other types of settlement services provided by non-profits and for-profits. However, bridging services are able to satisfy multiple goals and no other settlement service can completely replace them. Employees and volunteers are suppliers to service provision. Adult volunteers have high bargaining power since they are critical for contract performance. Youth volunteers are relative easy to recruit. Both newcomers and the BC government are clients. The Client Satisfaction Survey enhances newcomer power. Government client power is extremely high. The threats from new entrants are insignificant since only a few organizations can win contracts under BCSAP stream 2. NPOs who have been offering other types of settlement services are likely to become new entrants, but their number is also very limited. The Federal and BC governments could change the competitive landscape because they have exclusive regulatory power, but it seems unlikely that they will change relevant regulations either frequently or in the near future.

4.8 Key Success Factors

The following key success factors are derived from the above competitive forces analysis and shed light on an analysis of internal factors presented in Chapter 5. The success factors should help the Connections Program identify its competitive position by assessing how well it performs in relation to the success factors.

In the Bridging Service sector, getting government contracts is essential. A history of successful contract wins is very important. Program performance, measured by match quality and quantity, is the most important criterion employed by the government when making funding decisions.

The key success factor for good quality program delivery is dedicated support for, and from, volunteers. The key success factors for satisfactory quantity are recruitment and operations effectiveness, and positive referrals.

4.8.1 Dedicated Support for Volunteers

In the “Community Bridging Program Research Project” conducted by the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA) of BC, many volunteers made the case that orientation, training and on-going supports are very important for them to understand and carry out their responsibilities.⁴⁰ Because newcomers tend to be shy and hesitant to communicate with volunteers, dedicated volunteer support that involves cross-cultural training, conflict-resolution guidance and timely follow-up is critical. How well volunteers perform their jobs directly influences service quality and the program’s reputation.

Given the shortage of adult volunteers, assisting them to do a good job and encouraging them to re-host is an effective way to generate new matches.

4.8.2 Positive Referrals

The best advertisement for a bridging service program is a successful match, since it often results in positive word-of-mouth referrals. Participant referral is always the

⁴⁰ Community Bridging Program Research Project, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC, March 2003, P26

fastest way to get a new match participant, especially for youths, who are often in daily contact with peer newcomers at school. Referrals from other organizations, such as schools, community agencies and other NPOs, are also effective. Internal referrals from other programs within the organization are effective as well.

To meet match number targets, service providers have tried various methods to attract new participants. Referral is definitely an important success driver since, because of limited budgets, NPOs often find it difficult to do extensive promotions.

4.8.3 Recruitment and Operations Effectiveness

As the BC government cares about cost, contractors must maximize cost efficiency, both in recruitment and in every-day operations.

The Bridging Service sector has two marketing targets: newcomers and volunteers. Contracted NPOs have to solicit newcomers and volunteers through different marketing channels. For example, some organizations have outreach workers who promote one specific program; some use a general marketing strategy to advertise all their programs; others enhance partnerships rather than using direct advertising to recruit participants. Whatever approaches they select, the volume of incoming inquiries, assessed participants and successful matches relative to marketing expenses would measure marketing effectiveness.

With regard to operational efficiency, the ability to effectively allocate limited manpower is key. Some types of service are priorities for success, whereas some are nice to have, but are not essential. To win in the long run, highly effective and standardized operational procedures, particularly a streamlined workflow, are critical.

4.9 The Attractiveness of the Bridging Service Sector

The future attractiveness of the Bridging Service sector depends on three dynamics: sector growth potential, competitive forces, and prospects for success.

In summary, the history and market trend analysis reveals that the Bridging Service sector is stable and promising in Greater Vancouver. Positive factors for the Bridging Service sector are less intensive existing competitors and very limited new entrants. Substitute services do exist but cannot completely replace bridging services. Unappealing factors are high adult volunteer power and government client power. In sum, there are three key success factors in this sector: support for volunteers, recruitment and operational effectiveness, and positive referrals. With dedicated and on-going program development, service providers should be capable of building a well-balanced mix of service quality and quantity.

5 INTERNAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

An internal analysis of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver's Connection Program will guide decisions for developing both government and newcomer satisfaction. This section will identify activities in each stage of the value chain, analyze strengths and weaknesses, and then address cost-effectiveness and differentiation of the specific activities that create value for the Connections Program.

5.1 Describing the Connections Program's Value Chain

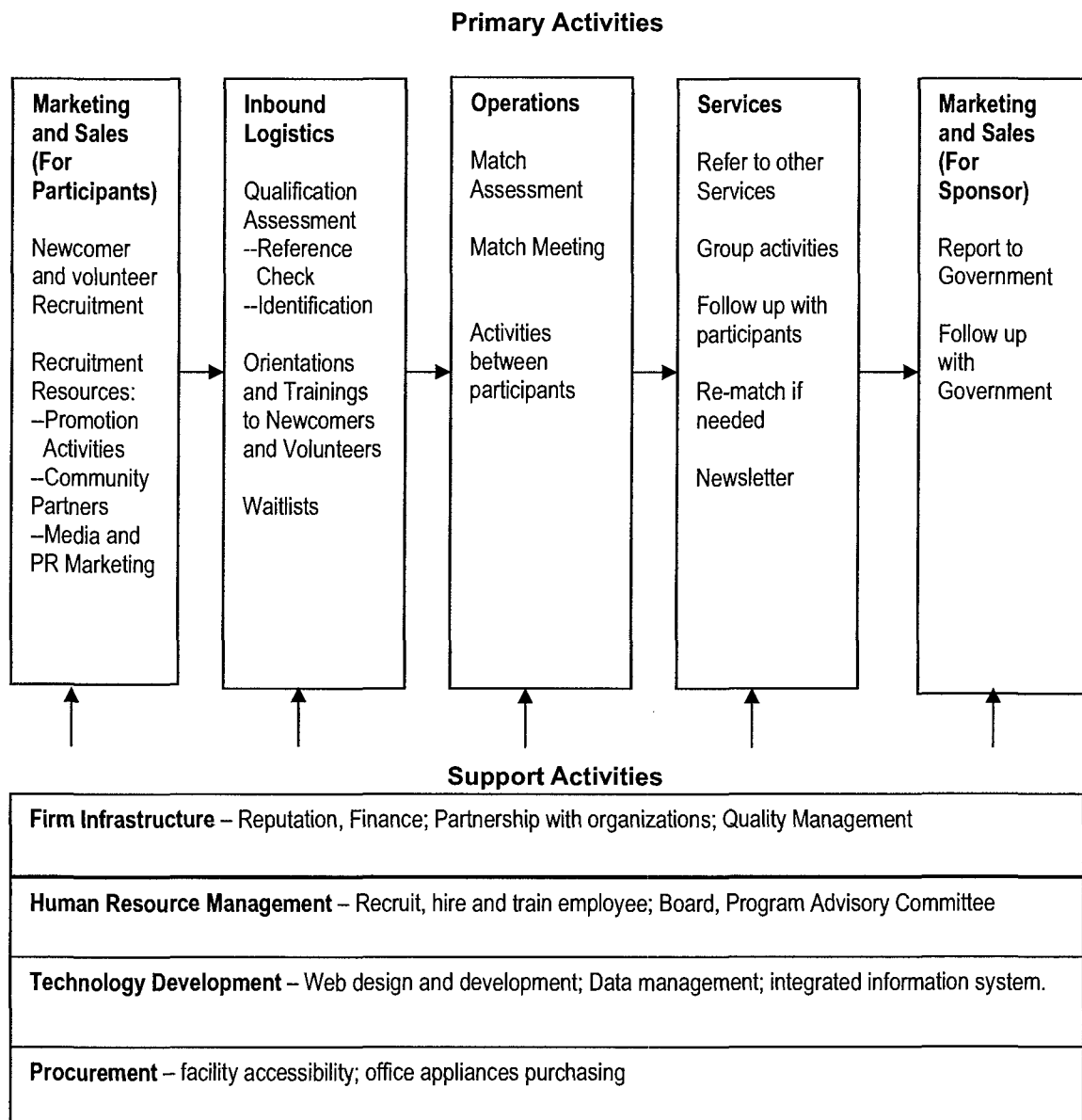
Five categories of primary activities in the "classic" value chain are: "Inbound Logistics", "Operations", "Outbound Logistics", "Marketing and Sales", and "Services".⁴¹ However, in the value chain for the Connections Program, the order of primary activities is somewhat different because of the separate marketing processes that are required for newcomer and government clients. To illustrate, a newcomer's decision to join the program is the first step in the value chain. This decision enables program staff to initiate inbound logistics and operations. Therefore, newcomer and volunteer recruitment, represented by various marketing activities, should be at the beginning of the value chain. Inbound logistics, operations and services then follow. The program manager's program performance report to the government for evaluation is a type of marketing and sales activity that occurs at the end of the value chain.

⁴¹ Michael E, Porter, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*, New York, Free Press, 1985, P39

Porter defined four types of support activities: “Firm Infrastructure”, “Human Resource Management”, “Technology Development” and “Procurement”. These are applicable to the Connections Program.⁴²

Figure 4 presents a customized value chain for the Connections Program.

Figure 4: The Value Chain of the Connections Program



⁴² Ibid

5.2 An Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses in the Value Chain

5.2.1 Marketing and Sales for Participants:

Given budget constraints, the Connections Program does not have a full-time outreach worker. The program manager and coordinator execute most recruitment responsibilities. There is no explicit plan or schedule for marketing activities, but program advisory committee members discuss and design marketing campaigns at quarterly committee meetings.

Sometimes, the Connections Program hires a part-time outreach worker to promote the program to communities, schools, churches, libraries and in other public places by distributing brochures and posters and attending volunteer events. The most effective way to recruit newcomers is by enclosing a program brochure in the newcomer's welcome package that is distributed at the airport. The most effective way to recruit volunteers is by posting volunteer vacancies on "www.govolunteer.ca" website, which is funded by Human Resource Development, Canada.

Compared to other NPOs, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver does not have a strong marketing program. SUCCESS has an office at the airport and refers newcomers directly to their Host Program. SUCCESS's experienced program manager frequently makes presentations to diverse community groups. Moreover, SUCCESS gets extensive media coverage. The Vancouver Sun and various Tri-City newspapers have run stories about the Host Program. This has helped SUCCESS achieve recognition as the "expert" in the field. ISSBC also has outstanding market exposure, as it constantly distributes brochures to libraries and in public areas. It also posts information about its program on university

websites. CTV has reported on ISSBC's Friendship Hosts Program. In combination, these marketing initiatives have helped these agencies reach a large audience and solidify their good reputation

Partnerships, one effective marketing approach, has not been fully utilized by the Connections Program. Even though the program proposal listed a significant number of prospective corporate partners, program personnel have only managed to contact a very few. Corporate partnerships could be a good source of volunteers, as they could promote the program and encourage their employees to volunteer. As well, although the program manager tried to develop a cooperative relationship with another bridging service provider, with the intention of establishing mutual referrals of participants living in each others' focus areas, contract competitive pressures eventually prevented cooperation. Without good partnerships, the Connections Program has not established an effective referral network.

Competitors, however, have been more effective at establishing partnership relationships, especially for youth programs. The Culture Buddy Program, run by the South Vancouver Neighbourhood house, is a good example. Almost all of its participants come from school referrals. In addition, some competitors have very good relationships with those organizations that participate in the BCSAP stream 4. These organizations are dedicated to supporting and coordinating other BCSAP NPOs and provide help with program development. For example, AMSSA, an organization under stream 4, completed a bridging service research project in 2003, in cooperation with MOSAIC and ISSBC. This led to a positive relationship between agencies. As a result, they frequently share

information and experiences. However, as a new member of BCSAP, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver is not well recognized by other NPOs.

Another issue that affects recruitment and marketing is the high cost. As other service providers have diversified immigration service programs, they often promote programs together and refer newcomers to each other, thereby creating further economies of scope in marketing. Furthermore, an agency that offers related programs can more easily capture and retain newcomers. However, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver is not able to offer these options to newcomers. The Connections Program markets a single program, which incurs significantly higher marketing costs and labour input.

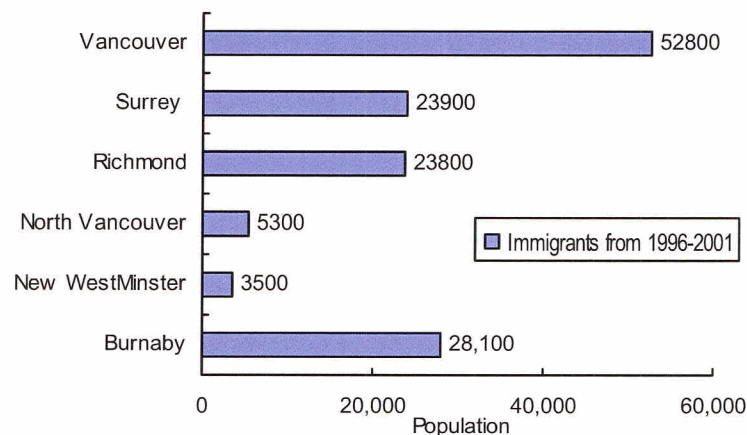
In summary, the Connections Program does not perform effectively in marketing and sales. Current barriers that are hard to overcome are high marketing costs and no offerings of complementary services. Other disadvantages, such as less media attention and inadequate partnerships, could be overcome with ongoing program development.

5.2.2 Inbound Logistics

The YMCA of Greater Vancouver runs their Connections Programs in three locations: Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey. The main office is located in downtown Vancouver, with sister offices at the South Slope YMCA and the Tong Louis YMCA. Participants can select any of these three locations to participate in the initial interview, orientation sessions and match meetings. The availability of multiple locations greatly improves client satisfaction. Although program staff does not usually work at South Slope or Tong Louis, they frequently travel to these locations to provide convenient service to participants.

Sargeant points out that there is an intrinsic link between the presence of physical locations and target market gain and coverage.⁴³ It is much easier to attract participants if they do not have far to travel. According to recent immigrant distribution statistics, four municipalities (Vancouver, Burnaby, Surrey, and Richmond) attracted 75 percent of Greater Vancouver's new immigrant population from 1996 to 2001. Vancouver led all local municipalities by attracting more than double the new immigrants of those of Burnaby, Surrey and Richmond. Surrey ranked third, slightly lower than Burnaby and higher than Richmond (see Figure 5).⁴⁴

Figure 5: Immigrant Distributions in the Major Areas of Greater Vancouver (1996-2001)



Source: International Migration Continues to Fuel Greater Vancouver's Population Growth and Multicultural Change, GVRD Policy and Planning Department, Feb. 2003

The presence of Connections Program sites in three locations is a distinct advantage, providing broad availability for the target market. Although competitors have

⁴³ Adian Sargeant, *Marketing Management for Nonprofit Organizations*, Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 2005, P160.

⁴⁴ *International Migration Continues to Fuel Greater Vancouver's Population Growth and Multicultural Change*, GVRD(The Greater Vancouver Regional District) Policy and Planning Department, February 2003, <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/growth/pdfs/Census2001-Immigration.pdf>

good locations as well, the YMCA's facilities are more geographically distributed and, in the case of the downtown Vancouver site, more easily recognized. For example, ISSBC and MOSAIC also have offices in Vancouver, but the downtown YMCA building has a long history, is well-known, and is easily identifiable by the large YMCA logo on the building's roof. As well, it is close to the Burrard Street Sky-Train station and has a bus stop serving multiple routes right outside its front door. Furthermore, South Slope and Tong Louie YMCAs are also very well known in the communities they serve and have no direct competitors located close to them. In bridging service programs, newcomers may not be familiar with more remote communities and time-conscious volunteers are usually unwilling to travel long distances. Therefore, the location advantage of the Connections Program is obvious.

Additional aspects of inbound logistics for service providers are interviews and orientation sessions. After receiving a newcomer's application, the program coordinator arranges an interview and a two-hour orientation session. These activities address specific client concerns and clarify program procedures. A well-prepared "Orientation Manual and Settlement Resource Guide" are provided. Most newcomers consider the orientation very helpful. Not all service providers offer orientation to newcomers, but some invite them to join general settlement seminars at a later date. Because many service providers have a large client base, with immigrants coming from different programs, they can share guest speakers and other resources. In contrast, the Connections Program has to conduct orientations independently and absorb the correspondingly high operational costs.

The Connections Program's volunteer qualification assessment is stricter than that of competitors. Volunteers are required to have at least 3 years of local Canadian

experience and be able to make a 6-month commitment. ISSBC only requires volunteers to be confident enough to provide services, but does not specify the minimum years of experience. MOSAIC requests a shorter time commitment of 13 weeks. Therefore, the Connections Program has fewer qualified volunteers than ISSBC or MOSAIC. Moreover, the Connections Program conducts reference and criminal record checks for every volunteer. Other organizations normally do reference checks only. Although the criminal record check costs \$40 per person, the Connections Program manager argues that newcomers are very vulnerable and must be protected. The manager considers criminal record checks for each volunteer as part of the program's risk management regime.

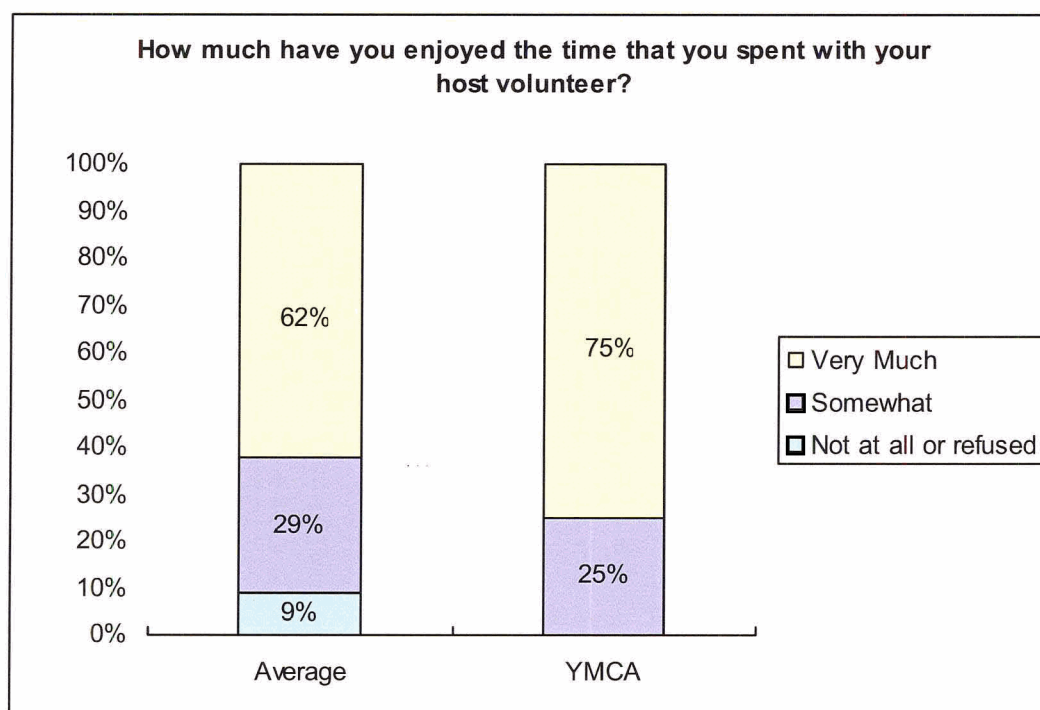
In order to help volunteers feel confident and provide good service, the Connections Program offers one-on-one orientation and training for volunteers. The training sessions' primary resource is the Volunteer Orientation Manual. The manual includes the YMCA mission statement, program benefits and procedures, suggested activities and some constructive general advices. Most importantly, program staff train volunteers to anticipate and understand newcomers' possible problems. As newcomers' problems are often complex, and not infrequently involve depression, the training, though usually successful, is time-consuming. Other service providers rarely offer such extensive orientation and training. Some provide group orientation, but no specific training.

The Connections Program performs well in terms of its "Inbound Logistics". Convenient locations benefit participants; dedicated training motivates and supports volunteers and higher requirements for volunteers further solidifies service quality. Most importantly, convenient locations in Vancouver and Surrey are competitive and

sustainable. Competitors would not be able to develop new locations either quickly or as economically.

The activities discussed above significantly contributed to newcomers' positive feedback. Details from the BCSAP 2005 Client Satisfaction Survey are presented in Figure 6.⁴⁵

Figure 6: Newcomers' Overall Enjoyment with Their Volunteers



Source: BCSAP Outcomes and Client Satisfaction Survey (Stream 2), 2005

Seventy-five percent of newcomers stated that they enjoyed the time with volunteers “Very Much” and no one answered “Not at all”. Compared to average survey results for all service providers, the Connections Program has done a great job.

⁴⁵BCSAP Outcomes and Client Satisfaction Survey (Stream 2), Ministry of Attorney General Settlement and Multiculturalism Division, 2005

5.2.3 Operations

The core operation in the Connections Program involves activities that provide the final “product”: that is, a match. The match assessment and match meeting activities fall into this category. Wait time depends on the newcomer’s requirements and expectations and is different for each match. The Connections Program tries to match people of similar age, who live close to each other and have interests in common. Currently, there are around 50 adult newcomers on the waitlist. They wait an average of 3 months for a match. Other organizations also have waitlisted adult newcomers, but their wait time is relatively short. Some organizations purposely stop recruiting newcomers when they do not have enough available volunteers. However, there is a contradiction inherent in this procedure. The government looks at the number of matches and at how many eligible newcomers are on the waitlist, but they do not check wait times. Facing this dilemma, program staff usually informs newcomers of the average wait time and determine if they are willing to be put on the wait list. In most cases, they are.

After a match assessment, a program staff member contacts the newcomer to provide information about his/her potential volunteer host and request a confirmation. This procedure is a little risky as the newcomer might reject the volunteer. ISSBC addresses this issue by omitting the confirmation step and directly requesting a match meeting. Some newcomers will ask for details; but, some do not. After the match meeting, the newcomer is unlikely to reject the volunteer, even if he/she is not satisfied. At this point, although Connections Program staff may receive a request for a different match at the beginning, the additional time involved is worthwhile because the program’s match quality is improved.

In summary, the Connections Program does not have either particular competitive weaknesses or strengths in operations. However, as the activities in operations tend to be transparent and easy to copy, service providers would find it difficult to sustain individual strengths in this area over time.

5.2.4 Services

In the Connections Program, volunteers, who actually deliver the service, are principally responsible for program quality. Program staff cannot completely control quality. However, they mitigate this lack of direct control by monitoring volunteer/newcomer interactions where possible, conducting timely follow-ups and arranging group activities.

The program manager sends “follow-up” emails or contacts volunteers by phone every month and requests feedback. Although not all volunteers respond to these initiatives, they do appreciate program staff’s continuous participation and support. In addition, timely “follow-up” is an effective approach to prevent requests for re-matches, since it can identify existing or potential conflicts between participants early in the relationship and enable staff to make suggestions or offer relevant solutions.

Because it bears on efficiency and government assessment results, re-matching is a common issue for service providers. The government counts a re-match as one match, not two, and service providers do not like to repeat their efforts. However, rematches are inevitable. The Connections Program responds to re-match requests if participants make a formal request. SUCCESS has a one-month trial period, which makes it easier for less satisfied participant to withdraw from the match. From the participant’s perspective, a

trial period lowers the risk level. From the government's perspective, it is a form of service guarantee. However, the trial period policy will affect match numbers, as counted by the government, to some extent.

As stated in the "Logic Model", referring newcomers to linking services is a part of bridging services. Some newcomers need other types of services, such as language classes, employment training, legal assistance, education consulting, childcare, etc. Program personnel gather relevant information and offer a resource guide to newcomers. Compared with other service providers that do not have a resource guide, the Connections Program performs well. However, competitors could offset the Connections Program's advantage by providing complementary settlement service programs.

The Connections Program organizes more group activities than do other organizations. The activities include monthly English conversation sessions, barbecues, potluck dinners and parties. The program manager considers group activities a great value-add for participants, although they consume time and budget resources.

In conclusion, the Connection Program's overall service is satisfactory, but it does not possess any unique competitive advantage or strength, as every competitor could emulate these services attributes if necessary.

5.2.5 Marketing and Sales for the BC Government

The program manager is responsible for submitting quarterly and annual reports to government. Reporting is the most important interactive relationship the agency has with the government. Reports communicate the program's performance and play a marketing and sales role.

It is hard to determine which organization's report is the most attractive or persuasive. However, SUCCESS has adopted an innovative approach by attaching the program's self-conducted "Client Satisfaction Survey", which contributes to the impression that SUCCESS really cares about newcomers' satisfaction levels and wants to integrate client feedback into its further development. From the government's perspective, this approach differentiates SUCCESS from other contractors.

The Connections Program submits reports regularly, but seldom follows up with the government. As relevant government officials take a "hands off" approach to contractors, the program manager appears to find approaching relevant government officials for feedback or advice difficult.

In conclusion, it is not possible to identify whether any organization has clear competitive strengths in the reporting activity. The Connections Program manager thinks that current service providers have fairly similar competencies in this area. To gain an advantage, a contractor would need to make a superior presentation that demonstrates its program's overall performance and value-added services.

5.2.6 Firm Infrastructure

The YMCA of Greater Vancouver has a distinctive global reputation, a significant intangible resource that plays an important role in its value creation process. Carmeli pointed out that intangible, more than tangible, resources have potential for competitive advantage creation.⁴⁶ Due to the YMCA's excellent reputation in the NPO world, newcomers and volunteers rarely question the service quality of the Connections

⁴⁶ Abraham Carmeli, Assessing Core Intangible Resources, *European Management, Journal*, 22 (1), P112

Program. They trust the agency and the program staff. Further, some newcomers prefer to join a familiar organization that operates in their home countries. In addition, the YMCA has considerable brand recognition with the youth generation and Christians, although it provides general community services. Therefore, the Connections Program has strong intangible resources that other NPOs cannot emulate.

As illustrated in Table 1, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver provides comprehensive programs serving various needs. Its Child Care department operates 61 childcare centres in Vancouver. Health and Fitness departments run extensive sports and fitness programs in four YMCA locations. No other existing competitor can compete with the YMCA of Greater Vancouver in program diversity and wide geographic service coverage at the present. Indeed, competitors are very unlikely to be able to compete on program diversity and service coverage area in the near future.

Each YMCA of Greater Vancouver program is autonomous in terms of budget, performance evaluation and employee hiring. The Connections Program can execute marketing campaigns, modify operations and control its budget according to its own needs. The decision making process is quite effective. However, there is a lack of regular communication among programs, although employees of different programs often exchange ideas and sometimes help other programs to do some jobs. Even in the International Development and Community Service Department, collaborating among programs is performed in an ad hoc manner.

In summary, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver has a distinctive global reputation and diversified programs that differentiates it from immigration-focused competitors. It is

difficult to judge whether this brand image is more important to the BC government or to newcomers. However, the Connections Program should utilize these competitive advantages in its strategy development.

5.2.7 Human Resource Management

Human resources in the Connections Program include program employees, the executive team, and the Program Advisory Committee. Involving and maintaining suitable people in the Connections Program team is an important task. Currently, program staff is experienced in developing community programs and have been well trained to provide professional service. They work full-time and are able to adjust their schedules to accommodate customer needs. They also contribute some evenings and weekends to group activities. However, they are not very experienced in the Bridging Service sector when compared to staff at other organizations that have been working in the sector for over five years. Moreover, current program staff members were not part of the start-up team. Although previous team members left related documents and operational standards, expertise is not easy to transfer. Every new employee needs time to overcome experience curve barriers, which inevitably affects overall operational efficiency.⁴⁷ In addition, due to the inconsistent workforce, some existing or potential networks with government, community partners and participants may lapse.

The Program Advisory Committee is a unique and important human resource in the non-profit sector. The Connections Program's Advisory Committee consists of program staff and volunteers with diverse backgrounds. Some of the volunteer members once worked for NPOs and some have had volunteer experience in similar programs. Program

⁴⁷ David Aaker, *Developing Business Strategies*, New York, John Wiley and Sons, 2001 P176

Advisory Committee meetings are held every quarter. Committee members are updated on program developments and can contribute ideas for the next stage of development. However, an agenda is not distributed to volunteer members before the meeting and no specific task assignments are made.

The Connection Program's executive team consists primarily of department managers reporting to the CEO. Department managers are involved in program development for approximately 3.5 hour a week and primarily address issues that arise from program operations. As most programs are very independent, it is hard to determine if other organizations' executive teams are more supportive of their programs.

In conclusion, an inconsistent workforce and less experienced staff suggest some disadvantage for the Connections Program. However, this disadvantage will diminish over time. The Program Advisory Committee is, potentially, an excellent resource and needs to be better utilized.

5.2.8 Technology Development

The Information Systems Department of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver is responsible for website design and security issues. The Connections Program can change web content according to its program needs. The program's web page includes background information, participation requirements and downloadable application forms. The overall presentation of the program web page is attractive and well-organized.

A data management system was established at the beginning of the program. Employees use the Microsoft Office suite to perform their every-day tasks. They use Access, a database management program, to manage matched-participants' information.

However, as waitlist information is not included in the Access database, program staff spends a lot of time reviewing volunteer records one at a time, looking for possible matches for waitlisted clients.

The International Development and Community Service Department's information system is integrated. Employees within the department are able to access different programs' information. This capability allows the executive team to supervise programs and deliver updated managerial documents to employees in a timely manner. However, the system is separate from that of other departments within the organization.

In conclusion, the technology development performance of the Connections Program is good. However, the match assessment process is somewhat impeded because waitlist information is not included in the Access database, but it would be relatively easy to remedy that deficiency. It is difficult to measure whether other organizations have more effective internal information systems.

5.2.9 Procurement

Procurement activities include purchasing office equipment and supplies, and scheduling access to facilities such as meeting and training rooms. In relation to competitive advantages or disadvantages, procurement does not present any specific concerns. As other service providers also have adequate space and similar purchasing capabilities, the Connections Program has neither competitive strengths nor competitive weaknesses in this dimension.

5.3 A Summary of Competitive Strengths and Weaknesses

Duncan, Ginter and Swayne present a practical approach to evaluating the effectiveness of an organization's value chain. They suggest categorizing identified strength and weakness factors in terms of resources or capabilities and then assessing the competitiveness of each factor.⁴⁸ Based on this approach, an assessment of internal factors in the Connections Program is summarized in Table 5.

⁴⁸ W. Jack Duncan, Peter M. Ginter, and Linda E. Swayne, Competitive advantage and internal organizational assessment, *Academy of Management Executive*, 12(3),1998, P6-16

Table 5: Assessment of Internal Factors of the Connections Program

| Strength/ Weakness | Resources | Value | Rareness | Imitability | Sustainability |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| S1 | <i>International Brand</i> | <i>Distinctive</i> | <i>Distinctive</i> | <i>Distinctive</i> | <i>Distinctive</i> |
| S2 | <i>Diversified Programs</i> | <i>Competitive</i> | <i>Competitive</i> | <i>Competitive</i> | <i>Competitive</i> |
| S3 | Web Development | Attractive | Attractive | Attractive | Attractive |
| S4 | Strong advisory committee | Potential | Potential | Attractive | Attractive |
| S5 | <i>Convenient Locations</i> | <i>Competitive</i> | <i>Competitive</i> | <i>Competitive</i> | <i>Potential</i> |
| S6 | Free Membership | Inadequate | Attractive | Attractive | Attractive |
| S7 | Effective decision making process | Attractive | Attractive | Attractive | Attractive |
| W1 | Inconsistent Workforce | Unattractive | Unattractive | Unattractive | Unattractive |
| W2 | High operation cost | Uncompetitive | Uncompetitive | Unattractive | Unattractive |
| W3 | <i>No Complementary Service</i> | <i>Un-competitive</i> | <i>Un-competitive</i> | <i>Un-competitive</i> | <i>Potential</i> |
| | Competency | Value | Rareness | Imitability | Sustainability |
| S8 | Excellent Orientation & Training | Competitive | Potential | attractive | attractive |
| S9 | Group Activities | Potential | Potential | attractive | attractive |
| S10 | Criminal Check | Potential | Potential | attractive | attractive |
| S11 | Timely monitor and follow up | Potential | Attractive | attractive | attractive |
| S12 | Professional Match meeting arrangement | Attractive | Attractive | Attractive | Attractive |
| S13 | Many participants in the waitlist | Attractive | Attractive | Attractive | Attractive |
| W4 | Weak recruitment activities | Uncompetitive | Potential | Unattractive | Unattractive |
| W5 | Lack of cooperation among programs | Unattractive | Unattractive | Unattractive | Unattractive |
| W6 | Data management inefficiency | Unattractive | Unattractive | Unattractive | Unattractive |
| W7 | Long Waiting time | Unattractive | Unattractive | Unattractive | Unattractive |

Table 6 synthesizes three competitive advantages and one competitive disadvantage from Table 5 and analyzes them as potential sources of differentiation or cost leadership.

Table 6: Strength and Weakness as Potential Source of Competitive Advantage and Disadvantage

| Strength/Weakness | Potential Source of Competitive Advantage/Disadvantage | Location on the Value Chain |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| S: International Brand | Differentiation Driver | Firm Infrastructure |
| S: Diversified Programs | Differentiation Driver | Firm Infrastructure |
| S: Convenient Locations | Differentiation Driver | Inbound Logistics |
| W: No Complementary Services | Cost Driver | Marketing and Sales to participants, Inbound Logistics |

Three competitive strengths -- international brand recognition, diversified programs and convenient location, are differentiation drivers that distinguish the Connections Program. One competitive weakness -- no provision of complementary services, is a cost driver and can result in unsatisfactory match numbers.

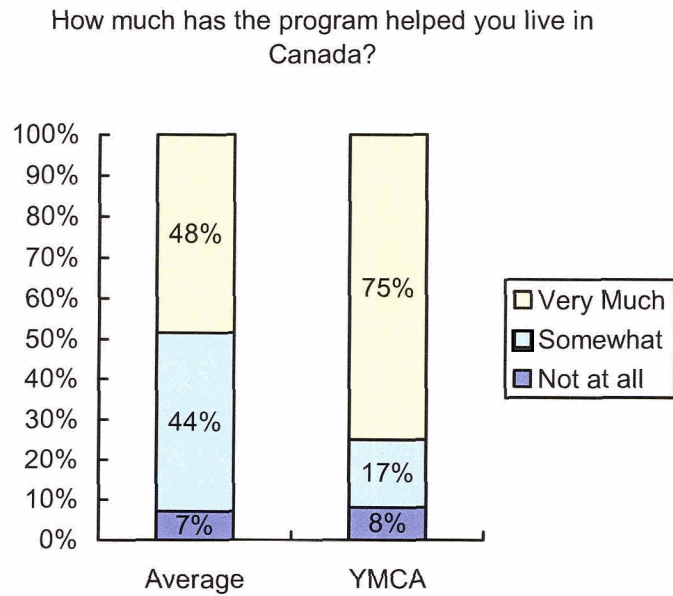
6 THE CURRENT STRATEGY OF THE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

As an international NPO, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver has a wide range of programs. Although several settlement service programs had been in operation, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver has not developed a strategic plan that focuses on this service sector. However, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver has ample experience in running various community service programs, including volunteer programs that many NPOs do not have the competency or resources to run. For these reasons, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver successfully contracted the bridging service program.

The Connections Program employees are adept at initiating programs and following government instructions. They designed a very well-organized service workflow and run the program in a professional way. According to 2005 BCSAP Client Satisfaction Survey results, 75 percent of the YMCA's clients indicated that the Connections Program helped them to adapt to life in Canada. Only 48 percent of all surveyed clients (from all service providers) gave this positive response.⁴⁹ (Figure 7) The survey results reveal that the Connection Program's service quality is much superior to the average service quality of all service providers. As a relatively new participant in the Bridging Service sector, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver was greatly encouraged.

⁴⁹ BCSAP Outcomes and Client Satisfaction Survey (Stream 2), Ministry of Attorney General Settlement and Multiculturalism Division, 2005

Figure 7: Survey on the Helpfulness of the Bridging Program



Source: BCSAP Outcomes and Client Satisfaction Survey (Stream 2), 2005

6.1 Full Services

The Connections Program is the only BCSAP-funded program that offers three tiers of services. Other service providers focus on only one or two service tiers. Therefore, the Connections Program is able to provide alternatives to address different needs and is able to serve newcomers of all ages. Both youths and adults are eligible for the service and children can join the program with their parents. However, other service providers may have to use an age-range broader than that used by the YMCA of Greater Vancouver to define their client group. For example, SDISS only has a youth program. To attract relatively older participants, SDISS defines youth participants as 15-25 years old. In the Connections Program, youth participants are defined as those younger than 18. Another example is regarding match suitability: ISSBC does not have a youth match program, so younger volunteers, such as junior college/university students, are matched

with much older adult immigrants. The Connections Program, offering three tiers of service, is more likely to be able to arrange suitable matches between volunteers and clients of similar ages. Compared to other service providers, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver is less likely to lose customers. However, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver does not provide complementary services that others have, which makes it difficult for the Connections Program to attract clients and provide a variety of volunteer opportunities to grow its volunteer base.

6.2 High Quality

The Connections Program, as with other YMCA programs, is responsible for promoting the YMCA's mission and values. It tries to differentiate itself as a high-quality service provider.

The most important activities receive the largest resource allocation.⁵⁰ Eighty-two percent of the Connections Program's budget is allocated to employee salaries.⁵¹ Therefore, activities consuming more man-hours expend a larger percentage of the budget. As the value chain analysis suggested, volunteer orientation and training, as well as match meeting arrangements, incur significant cost. Group activities also take time to design and organize. These activities contribute to superior service quality. However, program staff did not devote sufficient effort and time to recruiting participants, which resulted in less than ideal match numbers.

⁵⁰ Anthony E. Boardman and Aidan R. Vining, *A Framework for Comprehensive Strategic Analysis*, 2003.

⁵¹ The YMCA of Greater Vancouver Bridging Services Proposal, RFP# ON-000321

6.3 Financial Performance Analysis

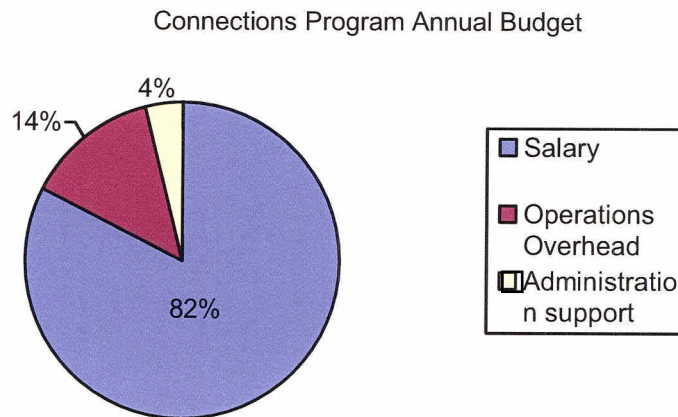
The YMCA of Greater Vancouver received funding of \$228,462 in January 2005 for an 18-month contract. Under the terms of that contract, from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, the Connections Program accomplished 108 matches. Every match generated approximately \$1,300 in revenue for the Connections Program. As the match number did not hit the contracted target of 250, the government paid almost twice the anticipated cost per match. In June 2006, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver successfully negotiated an extension of the contract for another 6 months, resulting in additional revenue of \$76,154.⁵²

The government funded the Connections Program based on the actual costs that were put forward in the program proposal, which included staff salary, program operations overhead and administration support costs. Administration support costs include MIS support, account services and insurance. Figure 8 illustrates the Connection Program's annual budget in these three categories.⁵³

⁵² Bridging Services Agreement (C0534464S2CB), The YMCA of Greater Vancouver and The BC Government, June 2006.

⁵³ The YMCA of Greater Vancouver Bridging Services Proposal, RFP# ON-000321

Figure 8: Connections Program Annual Budget on Three Categories



Source: The YMCA of Greater Vancouver Bridging Services Proposal (RFP#ON-000321)

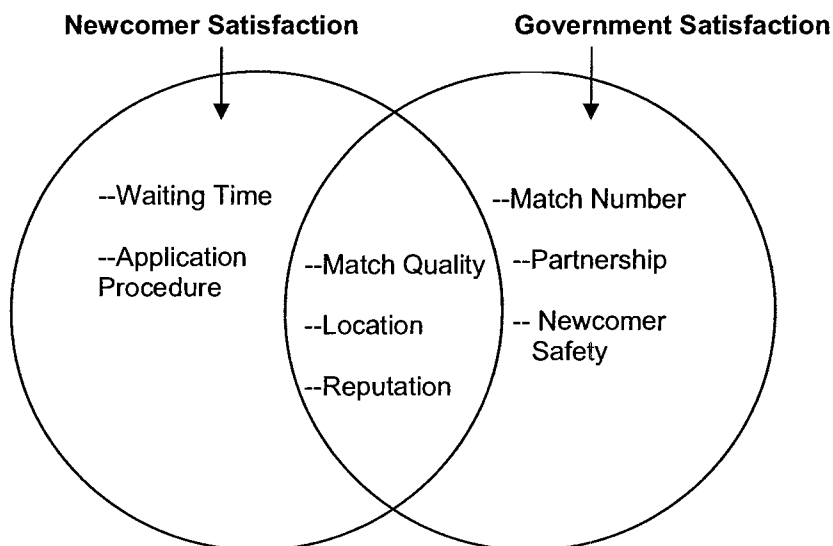
The Connections Program has managed its budget well and maintained around 7.4 percent variances until August 2006.⁵⁴ The program manager is planning to make use of these variances to carry out some marketing campaigns. The overall financial performance of the program is more than acceptable.

⁵⁴ Connections Program Financial Report --August 2006, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver.

7 EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

The Connections Program has two major goals: satisfying clients and breaking even. An evaluation must consider how well the Connections Program performs in terms of these goals. Government satisfaction factors overlap with those of newcomers with regard to match quality, location and reputation. However, both the government and newcomers have unique measures as well. The government takes match numbers, partnerships and newcomer safety into consideration. Newcomers care about wait times and application procedures. Figure 9 illustrates where there is overlap (joint factors) and where there is not (unique factors – either government or newcomer).

Figure 9: Client Satisfaction Factors of the Connections Program



7.1 Performance Evaluation on Joint Factors

1. Match Quality

The Client Satisfaction Survey is a good measure of match quality. Every newcomer answers 15 questions and offers his/her personal opinions. As Figure 7 in Chapter 6 indicates, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver achieved a very positive outcome on the survey.

2. Reputation and Location

Reputation and location are competitive strengths for the YMCA of Greater Vancouver. These factors were discussed in section 5.2.

7.2 Performance Evaluation on Government Satisfaction Factors

1. Match Numbers

The YMCA of Greater Vancouver is not able to estimate how much funding competitors received. If all major organizations got similar funding, match numbers would reflect the government's cost for each match. The organization with higher match numbers would have lower service costs and vice versa. Table 7 presents an estimate of major providers' annual match numbers. The numbers were obtained by interviewing program insiders and third party experts.

Table 7: An Estimate of Major Service Providers' Annual Match Number

| Service Provider | ISSBC | MOSAIC | SUCCESS | The YMCA of Greater Vancouver |
|------------------|-------|--------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Match Number | 250 | 75 | 100 | 108 |

ISSBC has a significantly higher match number. SUCCESS and the YMCA of Greater Vancouver's numbers are similar and fall between those of ISSBC and MOSAIC, which has the lowest match number. The number that the YMCA of Greater Vancouver achieved is not entirely unsatisfactory even though it did not hit the contracted target. Since competitors such as MOSAIC and SUCCESS achieved similar numbers, the government might consider the Connections Program's match number to be acceptable.

2. Partnership

"Partnership", in this context, does not refer to a marketing technique that involves cooperation with diversified organizations. From the government's perspective, "partnership" means collaborating among NPOs, which is regarded as an important approach to strengthen the settlement service sector as a whole. In the "Logic Model", the government requests that service providers collaborate with other agencies to address service-linking issues and promote partnerships. However, several program staff members from different organizations mentioned that collaborating with direct competitors is usually not feasible due to contract competition. Therefore, there are rarely any partnerships among these organizations under BCSAP stream 2.

3. Newcomer Safety

Risk management is an important concern in the non-profit world. The BC government cares about newcomer safety and has suggested that contractors conduct criminal record checks for volunteers. The Connections Program insisted on criminal record checks from the program's inception, a policy initiative that differentiates it from competitors.

7.3 Performance Evaluation on Newcomer Satisfaction Factors

1. Waiting Time and Application Procedure

How long a newcomer must wait for a match and how convenient the application procedure is can affect a newcomer's overall satisfaction. There is a longer wait time for newcomers wishing to participate in the Connections Program than for programs delivered by other services providers. However, most newcomers understand the problems associated with recruiting volunteers and are willing to endure the wait time. Most often, they will not compare service or wait times. Consequently, the wait time issue is not significant.

The YMCA of Greater Vancouver's application procedure is similar to that of other service providers and is satisfactory.

7.4 Finance Performance

The economic goal of the Connections Program is to maintain a breakeven financial situation. In this regard, the program performs well at present. It is impossible to know the other programs' operational costs and exact funding amounts, consequently the

Connections Program is not able to benchmark its financial performance relative to competitors.

8 ASSESSING EXPECTED PERFORMANCE GIVEN CURRENT STRATEGY

Boardman and Vining have pointed out that a performance matrix that places industry or sector attractiveness on one axis and the organization's competitive position on the other is a good assessment model for a single business or program.⁵⁵ This chapter will apply this approach to the Connections Program.

The assessment will consider external environment changes in the Bridging Service sector first. As indicated in section 4.9, the future of the sector is stable and promising. Therefore, the overall attractiveness of the sector will continue to remain "Medium".

The current competitive position of the Connections Program is "Medium-Strong", as it is strong at service quality and ranks second in match number. It also has an outstanding reputation and multiple locations. Other factors, such as partnerships and wait times, are less significant and similar across organizations. However, if the Connections Program continues following its current strategy, its current "Medium-Strong" competitive position is likely to slide to "Medium" or even "Medium-Weak". There are three key reasons for predicting this potential decrease in competitive positioning.

⁵⁵ Anthony E. Boardman and Aidan R. Vining, *A framework for comprehensive strategic analysis*, 2003

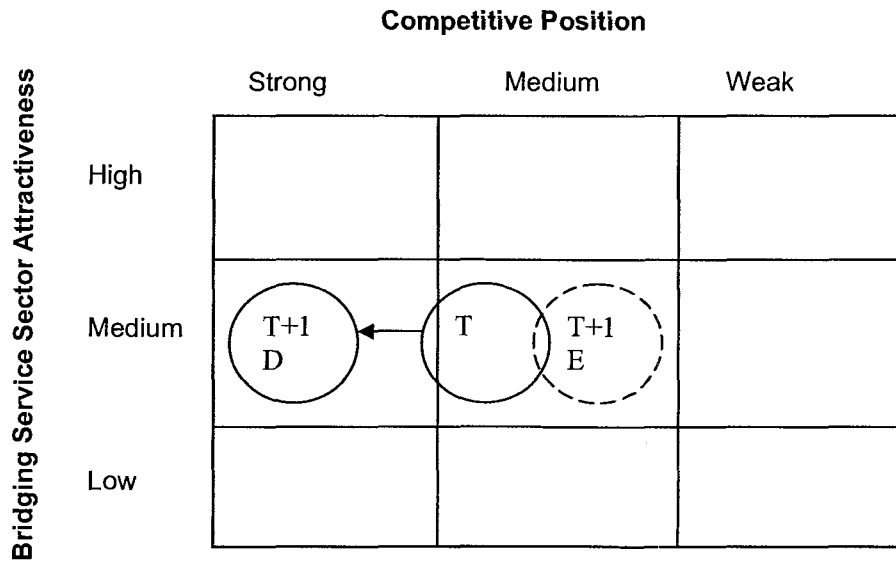
1. Competitors such as ISSBC and SUCCESS have had many years of service experience. They possess a large participant base. They have higher or similar match numbers and their successful match stories could increase word-of-mouth referrals. Moreover, ISSBC and SUCCESS' current recruitment methods, bolstered by extensive media attention and well-developed community relationships, would be hard to overtake in a short time.
2. Without complementary services, the Connections Program faces high recruitment costs for both volunteers and clients. Competitors with complementary services could strengthen relations among similar programs to develop a strategic group to recruit and "lock" customers. Should this occur, the Connection Program's match number issue would remain unresolved.
3. As long as the Connections Program maintains its current differentiation strategy, service quality will be good. However, its advantages, such as volunteer training and a greater number of group activities, are not sustainable. If competitors imitate elements, which presently differentiate the Connections Program, or find a better way to satisfy newcomers, these advantages will be less valuable. This is particularly significant because the Connections Program does not have competitive strength in operations and services.

Therefore, if the Connections Program sticks with its current strategy, the expected competitive position may worsen. Figure 10 summarizes this prediction, with current performance shown as "T" (current time), expected future performance at some future time, given no change in strategy, as "T+1, E". The next chapter will provide suggestions

that could elevate the Connections Program to a more desirable competitive position.

This is presented as time “T+1, D”.

Figure 10: Performance Matrix of the Connections Program’s Competitive Position



9 STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter makes recommendations that are based on the preceding analyses, outlines the strategic goals of the Connections Program, identifies and assesses strategic alternatives and, finally, recommends a strategy that would best suit the goals of the Connections Program.

9.1 First, Some Corporate-Level Suggestions

Although this paper does not aim to provide a corporate-level strategy (i.e., a comprehensive analysis of all the YMCA's programs) and has not conducted an analysis of other programs' strategies, some suggestions regarding the YMCA of Greater Vancouver's corporate strategy could benefit the Connections Program's development.

9.1.1 Apply for Other Types of Settlement Service

Overall, settlement services need to be seen as an inter-dependent system. Providing a group of settlement services would not only better serve newcomers' needs, but would also maximize the organization's economies of scope. If the YMCA of Greater Vancouver provided complementary settlement services, competitive disadvantages in operations and recruitment would diminish.

9.1.2 Increase Internal Cooperation

An excellent international reputation and diversified programs are competitive strengths of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver. The Connections Program should try to distribute program information to as many potential participants as possible. As the YMCA of Greater Vancouver has established diversified programs, its existing customer base and relationships are invaluable resources. For example, the childcare division has 61 locations and extensive customers. Regularly distributing Connections Program's information at Childcare facilities and piggybacking on these facilities' distribution channels would be a low-cost recruitment strategy. The Youth Exchanges Canada program has very good relationships with many companies and schools and it would be relatively easy for the Connections Program to take advantage of existing relationships rather than to establish new ones. Similarly, the New Venture program staff frequently promotes their program to employment-focused NPOs and professional associations. The Connections Program could share marketing resources, such as promotion material and outreach workers, with them. The YMCA of Greater Vancouver could develop better and different modes of cooperation within departments and across the organization.

In order to enhance internal program collaboration, the executive team needs to facilitate regular contact between program managers to ensure that they fully utilize sharable resources.

9.2 Connections Program Strategic Alternatives

The Connections Program could elect to adopt the following strategic alternatives.

9.2.1 Maintains the Status Quo (Alternative A)

Maintaining the status quo would be the easiest route for the Connections Program. Program staff would continue to recruit volunteers and newcomers in three areas: Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey. They would continue to provide three tiers of services, each of which address different needs. Match numbers and quality would not be affected.

9.2.2 Focus on Two Tiers of Services: Adult/Family and Youth in Three Areas (Alternative B)

From the data presented in Table 1, it is evident that the YMCA of Greater Vancouver is a youth-focused organization. Its brand image explicitly appeals to young people. Its famous “Y” logo does not avail itself of an interpretation other than “Young”. If the Connections Program applied this advantage, higher matches in the Youth tier would be expected. For example, the Connections Program could cooperate with schools and other youth-focused NPOs, such as Big Brothers and Big Sisters, to increase youth newcomers’ referrals. Referrals from internal programs, such as Youth Exchanges Canada and Summer Camp programs, would generate participants as well. As fewer competitors exist in youth market at present, collaborating with various organizations and investing in the Youth tier makes sense. Increasing the match number to 140 is approachable.

However, as relationship building takes time, the amount of time available to staff to execute and develop the Adult/Family tier may decrease. The overall service quality might be slightly lowered.

9.2.3 Focus on Two Tiers of Services: Adult/Family and Leadership in Three Areas (Alternative C)

The Leadership tier is the least competitive market. There are only two service providers in Greater Vancouver. The biggest problem for the leadership program is recruiting suitable volunteers. If participants in the leadership program had similar career backgrounds, it would create efficiencies in volunteer recruitment. Program staff could identify complementary volunteer sources, such as professional associations and corporations in the same industry sector. Program staff could solicit newcomers with similar backgrounds from labour-focused English training classes and employment agencies. With on-going focused recruitment, the total leadership match number might break zero and, potentially, reach 30. However, with fixed labour inputs available, it is possible that youth matches will suffer. It is reasonable to estimate that the total match number would reach 120.

There are several positive considerations for investing in the Leadership tier. Newcomers who would benefit from leadership matches are generally better educated, are more concerned with career advancement, and have better English language skills than newcomers from other classes of immigrants. Consequently, they are more likely to be extremely appreciative and more able to generate word-of-mouth referrals. Leadership matches will lead to higher satisfaction levels. Moreover, the government will be happy with the breakthrough and added value represented by this emerging service.

9.2.4 Provide Three Tiers of Services in Vancouver and Surrey (Alternative D)

The value chain analysis revealed that strong service accessibility is a competitive strength for the Connections Program. With convenient locations in Vancouver and

Surrey, the program can focus on these two areas and build strong neighbourhood relationships. Collaborating with local organizations, such as churches, stores, libraries, and educational institutions and organizations, would be an effective approach. For example, a program staff member could go to Surrey for two or three days a week, to manage local inquiries and develop operations. Such efforts would make a positive impression on local communities, participants and partners. Surrey is an important immigrant distribution area and no competitor is providing adult-match programs there. In addition, the Tong Louie Family YMCA already has a relationship with Surrey City and has great potential to develop effective local partnerships.

The City of Vancouver has the highest immigrant distribution level in the Greater Vancouver area. Targeting Vancouver is a sensible approach. The YMCA has two conveniently located facilities in different areas of Vancouver. Although Burnaby has potential as well, the Connections Program does not have sufficient budget to promote the program intensively in three areas. In addition, as most major competitors are competing in Burnaby, the Connections Program does not have any obvious advantages, either in office locations or in partnerships.

It is reasonable to assume that investing budget and allocating manpower to two areas, Vancouver and Surrey, will generate more referrals, particularly positive word-of-mouth referrals, and thereby generate higher match numbers, potentially as many as 145. However, if the number of clients goes up and staffing levels remain constant, there will be less time available for all aspects of program delivery and service quality may go down.

9.2.5 Focus on Two Tiers of Services: Adult/Family and Youth in Vancouver and Surrey (Alternative E)

Given the brand recognition and location advantages discussed in alternatives B and D, concentrating on the Adult/Family and Youth tiers in Vancouver and Surrey would be the most effective way to increase participation levels. Young people are most likely to pass the program message among their peers. Local partners are also critical for the success of a program. For example, The South Neighbourhood achieves 30 youth matches every year because of two local schools' dedicated support. If the Connections Program collaborated with 2-3 schools in Vancouver or Surrey, assuming available manpower to supervise youth activities, it could enhance its reputation in these neighbourhoods. Communicating success stories to local media would further improve the program's reputation. By employing these strategies, the match number could possibly increase to 165.

However, limited staff resources coupled with rising participation levels remains problematic. Unless administrative efficiencies and other economies of scope are realized, overall quality may decrease slightly.

9.2.6 Alliance with Other Immigration Service Providers without Bridging Service Program (Alternative F)

This alternative is to continue providing current services and, simultaneously, ally with NPOs that do not offer bridging service programs. Some NPOs, identified in section 4.3 as new entrants, have other types of settlement programs, which serve the same newcomer client base, and do not plan to enter the Bridging Service sector in the near future. The YMCA of Greater Vancouver could develop strategic alliances with NPOs that do not compete in the bridging services area to provide integrated services. This

initiative would strengthen both organizations' overall competency as well as enhancing both agencies' reputation with the government. However, alliances will bring more newcomers but not more volunteers. Without corresponding initiatives in volunteer recruitment, the match number will not increase significantly. Newcomer satisfaction will remain at the current level but the government would definitely allot more points for the collaboration.

Important decisions usually have conflicting objectives and usually involve trade-offs.⁵⁶ Pursuing a strategic mix of the alternatives presented would very likely result in a higher total match number. However, match quality will inevitably be sacrificed to some extent. Some services, such as group activities, might be affected due to limited budget or diminished labour input. However, when assessing the inevitable trade-offs, the Connections Program should choose to maintain current volunteer management activities, such as volunteer orientation and training, because volunteer management is a key success factor and will continue to differentiate the Connections Program from competitors on match quality.

Most alternatives would deplete existing variances, but the program would sustain breakeven.

9.3 Evaluation of the Strategic Alternatives

Chapter 7 identified government and newcomer satisfaction factors. Suggested alternatives will influence these factors. Different factors will affect satisfaction to different degrees.

⁵⁶ John S. Hammond, Ralph L. Keeney and Howard Raiffa, *Smart Choices – A Practical Guide to Making Better Decisions*, Harvard Business School Press, 1998, P83

9.3.1 Predicting Government Satisfaction

Based on the Connections Program manager's estimate, total match number accounts for about 65 percent of the government's satisfaction assessment. Match quality accounts for about 30 percent. The remaining 5 percent is assigned to other factors such as the organization's reputation, partnerships, locations, and newcomer safety.

A five-point scale will be used to assess the suggested strategic alternatives for match numbers:

| | |
|------------|---------|
| Low = | 100-115 |
| Med/Low = | 116-130 |
| Medium = | 131-145 |
| Med/High = | 146-160 |
| High = | >160 |

Estimated match quality depends on the percentage of newcomers who indicate that they are very satisfied in the "Client Satisfaction Survey". A similar five-point scale is used to assess the suggested strategic alternatives for client satisfaction:

| | |
|------------|---------|
| Low = | <70% |
| Med/Low = | 70%-73% |
| Medium = | 74%-77% |
| Med/High = | 78%-81% |
| High = | >81% |

The value of each scale varies from one to three.

Table 8 presents an impact prediction of government satisfaction based on these alternatives.

Table 8: Impact Prediction of Government Satisfaction

| Government Satisfaction Factors | Match Number | Match Quality | Others | Weighted Overall Satisfaction |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| A | 108 -- Low | Med/High | Med | 1.5 |
| B | 140 -- Medium | Medium | Med | 2 |
| C | 125 -- Med/Low | Med/High | Med-High | 1.85 |
| D | 145 -- Medium | Medium | Med | 2 |
| E | 165 -- High | Medium | Med/Low | 2.625 |
| F | 120 -- Med/Low | Med/High | Med/High | 1.85 |

Value of Each Scale: High: 3; Med-High: 2.5; Med: 2; Med-Low: 1.5; Low: 1

9.3.2 Predicting Newcomer Satisfaction

Match quality accounts for 90 percent of a newcomer's satisfaction while wait time and application procedure load accounts for 10 percent. An impact prediction of newcomer satisfaction is presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Impact Prediction of Customer Satisfaction

| Newcomer Satisfaction Factors | Match Quality | Others | Weighted Overall Satisfaction |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| A | 78 -- Med/High | Med | 2.45 |
| B | 75 -- Medium | Med | 2 |
| C | 82 -- High | Med/Low | 2.85 |
| D | 75 -- Medium | Med | 2 |
| E | 75 -- Medium | Med/High | 2.05 |
| F | 78 -- Med/High | Med | 2.45 |

Value of Each Scale: High: 3; Med-High: 2.5; Med: 2; Med-Low: 1.5; Low: 1

9.3.3 Evaluation of the Overall Value on Goals

The Connections Program ultimately has to satisfy two distinct client groups, the government and newcomers. Satisfying government weights about 70 percent and satisfying newcomer weights 30 percent. Combining the satisfaction predictions represented in Table 8 and 9, Table 10 presents weighted overall strengths of alternative strategies.

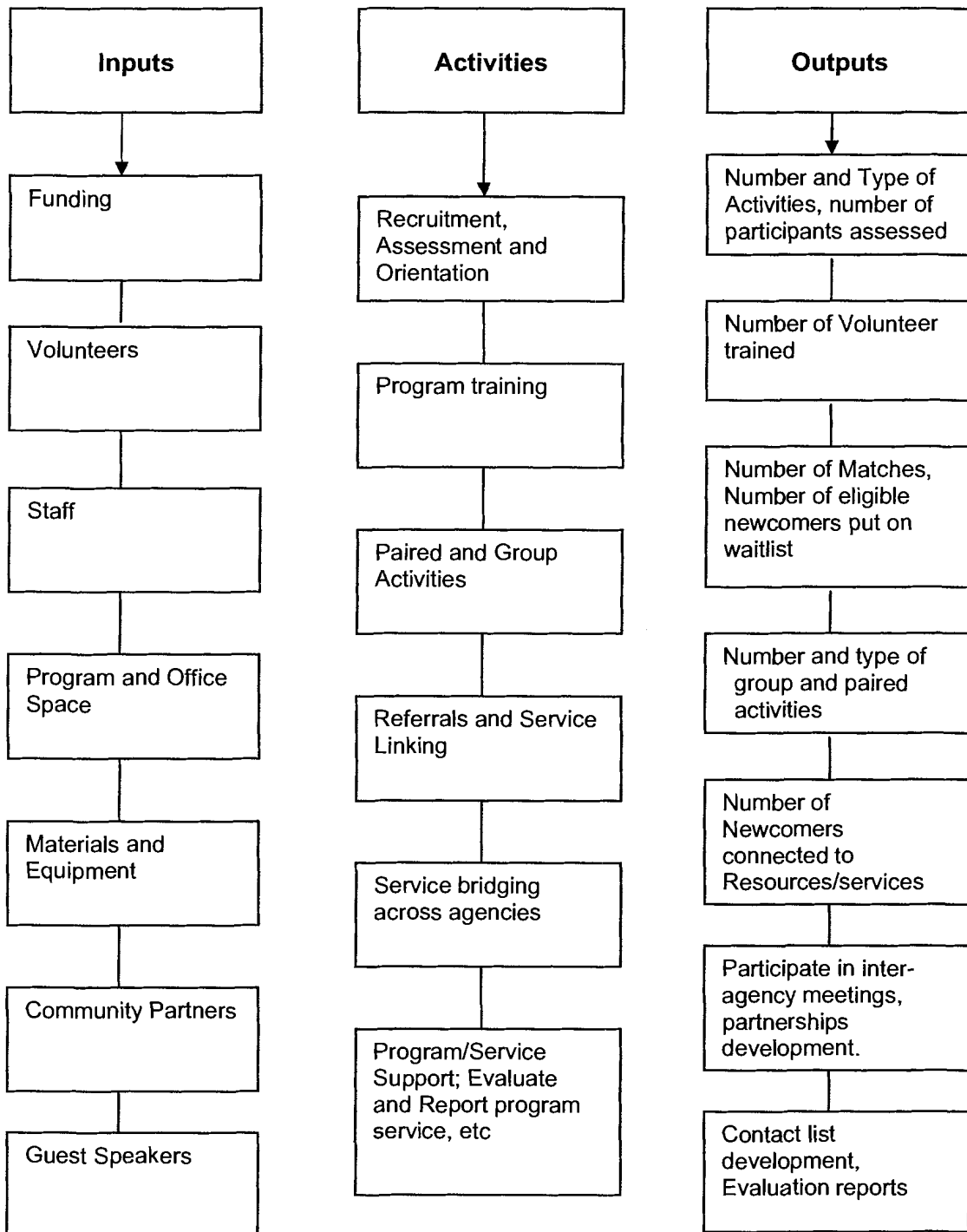
Table 10: Weighted Overall Strengths of Alternative Strategies

| Goals | Government Satisfaction | Newcomer Satisfaction | Weighted overall strengths |
|--------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A | 1.5 | 2.45 | 1.79 |
| B | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| C | 1.85 | 2.85 | 2.15 |
| D | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| E | 2.625 | 2.05 | 2.45 |
| F | 1.85 | 2.45 | 2.03 |

9.4 Recommended Strategy

Table 10 suggests that alternative E is most likely to achieve the Connections Program’s two primary goals, government and client satisfaction. To increase match numbers and keep acceptable service quality, the recommended strategy for the Connections Program is to provide two tiers of services (Adult/Family and Youth) in two focused areas, Vancouver and Surrey. Although adopting this alternative would not enable the program to hit the proposed match target in the near term, the balanced performance with respect to good match numbers and superior service quality will satisfy the clients. Compared to other service providers, the Connections Program is expected to move from a “Medium-Strong” position to a “Strong Position” in the long term.

APPENDIX A: BCSAP STREAM 2 LOGIC MODEL



APPENDIX B: NEWCOMERS BY CATEGORY (1980-2005)

| Category | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Family class | 51,354 | 51,361 | 50,287 | 48,944 | 44,523 | 39,357 | 42,475 | 53,816 | 51,413 |
| Economic immigrants | 49,891 | 60,239 | 51,707 | 24,187 | 26,079 | 26,113 | 35,840 | 74,094 | 80,220 |
| Refugees | 40,349 | 14,980 | 16,930 | 13,969 | 15,357 | 16,764 | 19,202 | 21,466 | 26,748 |
| Other immigrants | 1,548 | 2,063 | 2,253 | 2,094 | 2,315 | 2,101 | 1,835 | 2,666 | 3,172 |
| Category not stated | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 143,144 | 128,643 | 121,177 | 89,194 | 88,274 | 84,335 | 99,352 | 152,042 | 161,553 |
| Category | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 |
| Family class | 60,964 | 74,673 | 87,968 | 101,125 | 112,672 | 94,195 | 77,382 | 68,359 | 59,979 |
| Economic immigrants | 90,142 | 97,926 | 86,502 | 95,803 | 105,665 | 102,315 | 106,633 | 125,370 | 128,351 |
| Refugees | 36,863 | 40,234 | 54,074 | 52,348 | 30,622 | 20,435 | 28,092 | 28,478 | 24,308 |
| Other immigrants | 3,567 | 3,601 | 4,248 | 5,544 | 7,751 | 7,454 | 761 | 3,864 | 3,400 |
| Category not stated | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 191,538 | 216,434 | 232,792 | 254,820 | 256,710 | 224,400 | 212,868 | 226,072 | 216,038 |
| Category | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | |
| Family class | 50,898 | 55,277 | 60,612 | 66,795 | 62,304 | 65,129 | 62,260 | 63,352 | |
| Economic immigrants | 97,911 | 109,255 | 136,299 | 155,719 | 137,861 | 121,047 | 133,745 | 156,310 | |
| Refugees | 22,842 | 24,398 | 30,092 | 27,919 | 25,124 | 25,984 | 32,687 | 35,768 | |
| Other immigrants | 2,547 | 1,031 | 460 | 206 | 3,758 | 9,191 | 7,132 | 6,796 | |
| Category not stated | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 10 | |
| Total | 174,198 | 189,961 | 227,463 | 250,640 | 229,047 | 221,352 | 235,824 | 262,236 | |

Source: Facts and Figures – Immigration Overview, 2005 Canadian Citizenship & Immigration.

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