



Strategic Plan

2015-2020

New Canadians Centre Peterborough

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Message from the Board Chair & Executive Director

Dear Friend of NCC:

At the New Canadians Centre (NCC), we work to empower newcomers in our region to become full and equal members of Canadian society. We provide leadership to ensure community integration occurs in a way that is welcoming, safe and supportive.

To pursue our mission, the NCC Board of Directors has completed a comprehensive strategic planning process. As an integral part of this undertaking, we consulted with community agency partners, the public, current and former clients, staff members, and volunteers. The resulting document is built upon the strength of these diverse voices, which gives us confidence that our five-year strategic plan will guide NCC well, as well as the communities it serves.

While we took the time to engage our stakeholders, we also listened carefully to each other. We explored and discussed the many ideas, challenges and opportunities as they emerged. We pored over data and evidence, reviewed our performance to date, and considered evolving trends in funder mandates, demographics and policy.

Of course, a freshly approved strategic plan is far from *a destination*—it's just the beginning. But our work to get this far has benefited from engagement, collaboration, and vision. As a Board we have come together in the best interests of those we strive to serve to define three high-level, forward-looking strategic directions. They are:

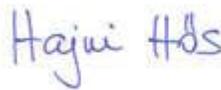
1. Strengthen Community Integration
2. Focus on Newcomer Youth
3. Invest in our Capacity

We are excited by the future of our organization. We hope this is evident in our plan. Finally, we would like to thank those who took the time to share their thoughts and participate in this planning process—after all, the NCC belongs to each and every one of you.

Sincerely,



Sil Salvaterra
Chair, Board of Directors



Hajni Hos
Executive Director

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About NCC

Mandate

The New Canadians Centre Peterborough (NCC) is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to supporting immigrants, refugees and other newcomers in the Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes, Haliburton and Northumberland regions.

Mission Statement

The New Canadians Centre Peterborough strives to empower immigrants and refugees to become full and equal members of Canadian society, and to provide community leadership to ensure cultural integration in a welcoming community.

Values

Respect, Diversity, Partnerships, Dedication

Overview of the Planning Process

Planning Highlights

The NCC Board, along with senior staff members, took part in every step of the strategic planning process. Over the course of four months—and with guidance from an external facilitator—our Board developed and rolled out its planning process.

An initial "kick off" strategic planning session was held with the Board and the senior staff (Appendix). The time was used to:

- design a process that fit the needs and situation of NCC;
- ensure the planning scope was correctly defined;
- make certain that the process would offer meaningful opportunities for stakeholder input and draw on data and knowledge to assist with decision making; and
- engage the board to consider potential strategic themes and issues likely to arise and identify assumptions that needed validation and testing.

Early in the planning process, the Board conducted a stakeholder review and a current-state analysis. An environmental scan, with information provided by multiple sources, was also undertaken to ensure Board Members were well informed of the current socio-political context of the planning initiative.

To engage NCC stakeholders, six consultation sessions took place. Two community partner sessions, two client sessions, and two staff and volunteer sessions were held—indeed, every NCC staff member was invited to take part. Additionally, an online survey was made available to stakeholders and the community. Hearing all these voices was a priority throughout the planning process.

From this work a 33-page summary report with key findings from the stakeholder consultation sessions, along with other assessment and analysis tools, was created. This document was used to inform the Board and senior staff members prior to a day-long Board retreat, held in late November, 2014.

The process culminated in a draft strategic plan that was presented to the Board in January, 2015. Following revisions, it received unanimous approval at our March 2, 2015 meeting.

Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholder consultation is a critical element of strategic planning in the nonprofit sector. It's a particularly important one for our organization, as NCC, along with other program and service providers across our region, is becoming increasingly integrated in our service delivery approach and methods. Today, we all work closer together than ever before to ensure we are efficient and effective. The following provides an at-a-glance summary of the stakeholder consultation sessions and the online survey findings.

Consultation Sessions

Stakeholder consultation sessions (externally facilitated focus groups) allowed NCC to gain honest insights by reaching out to community partners, as well as looking inward to understand feedback from staff, volunteers and clients.

A. Community Partner Sessions Summary

Two sessions were held: one at the Peterborough Library meeting room on September 11, 2014 and a second at NCC on September 17, 2014. Participant organizations are listed in the Appendix.

Highlights & Quotations

- NCC is strong — it is active in the community and proactive in its responses to needs.
 - Seen as a leader, well respected – while they can't do everything, they can play a leadership role in the community around immigration partnerships and strategy.
 - Their relationship with, and stewardship of, the Peterborough Partnership Council on Immigrant Integration (PPCII) was seen as important. Not all were clear on the roles.
 - NCC does good research – if they want to start a program, they first see what is already out there, and figure out how to do a good job of providing needed services.
 - "There is an evolution in how they do partnerships. NCC is becoming more strategic—in terms of choosing their partners, as well as their approach."
 - "The organization might be at a significant transition point. The support and services at NCC have been internally focused within their client group. With the changing demographics within the community, I think it may be time to focus on the community as a whole to help us all understand how our community is changing, and what it needs to do to receive and settle newcomers well."
 - "The vast majority of newcomers have children in the school system. NCC must focus on education as a result, and partner with the school boards, as well as organizations that deliver family services."
 - NCC should look at supporting new Canadians in the entire County of Peterborough and beyond.
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B. Staff and Volunteer Sessions Summary

Two sessions were held, both at NCC on September 17, 2014. Every staff member was given the opportunity to participate. The majority of participants were staff, with three or four in each session being longstanding volunteers.

Highlights & Quotations

- Supportive, collegial, safe atmosphere (colleagues and supervisors).
- Diverse team — 67% of current staff are newcomers themselves. 80% of current staff are newcomers, or former NCC volunteers, themselves —so they "understand".
- Staff and volunteers "feel proud to work at NCC".
- "Clients develop a sense of trust and eventually start presenting with needs that are not always settlement-related" which is good, but also creates other pressures.
- No one else provides immigration services locally so we have become well known and are seen as experts.
- Newcomers with no local contacts can get help quickly and access to many different services—this needs to be maintained.
- There was a strong desire for more stable language training to be available for all clients in our community.
- Some participants felt that NCC's strength almost enables other agencies/services to not take responsibility for improving their own capacity to meet the needs of newcomers—because they know the NCC can/will do it.
- Some participants suggested that there may be too much emphasis on "only the barriers, or high needs of the immigrant" but not enough emphasis on the "richness of their skills and assets they bring".
- Youth are an expanding demographic and if we don't serve them well, and early, they can become high needs clients, or at risk.
- Staff had several interesting and ambitious social enterprise concepts, and they also felt the organization is well positioned to do more philanthropic work.

C. Client Sessions Summary

Two sessions were held, both at NCC. The first, held on September 11, 2014, was a traditional focus group comprised of pre-selected current and former clients. The second session was held on October 14, 2014. Participants in this focus group were all attendees at an English language conversation class. The focus group session was held in lieu of class.

Highlights & Quotations

- NCC helps newcomers learn English, familiarize themselves with the community and connect with others.
 - "I always bring people here. I bring people here that I meet in ESL LINC classes at Fleming College."
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- “On campus occasionally I meet people who speak my home language, and I tell them NCC is a good place to start. People have different needs. Some people feel lonely and they want to meet friends, others want to learn English.”
- “I graduated last June and in order to apply for permanent residency you have to accumulate one year of work. So far I’ve landed a few short-term jobs, and I’ve accumulated four months. It is a headache. Sometimes it would feel so easy to just let go and go back home. But you have to be patient and keep the fire going. That’s why I come here. You have to work with employment counselors to help yourself.”
- Getting work here is hard for everyone, but can be especially hard for newcomers. “NCC really helps.”
- Better outreach to Trent and Fleming’s international students, and work more closely with the institutions so more graduates will want to stay in Peterborough and work or start businesses.

D. Online Survey Summary

The NCC online survey was live from Sept. 16 - 30, 2014. It was promoted by direct email invitation and through social media. There were no restrictions to participation. Total responses were 186, with about 60% finishing all the way through. This was considered a very high participation rate for a nonprofit online survey in Peterborough. The breakdown of who participated showed a good spread among NCC's stakeholder groups: Clients 25%; Community Member 25%; Volunteer 15%; Partners 16%; Board 9%; Staff 4%.

Highlights & Quotations

- 95% of respondents have an "excellent or good" overall impression of NCC. This rating is exceptional for online surveys done for non-profit in Peterborough.
- NCC is seen to have a strong brand and is well positioned for fundraising and catchment growth.
- There are several significant systemic issues that were seen as service gaps, or else as intractable social problems faced by many—including newcomers. These issues include employment, housing, transportation. Many stakeholders feel racism remains something newcomers face.
- " You do welcoming well and have all sorts of workshops, social groups, excursions, language classes, etc. Personally, I feel more language training is necessary and perhaps cultural training too for immigrants. Your work in the community has helped encourage Peterborough natives to accept immigrants."
- "NCC has been great in providing settlement services to newcomers. However, in terms of being the voice of newcomers and immigrants, I think the agency should decide on how to make a stand on certain contentious issues."
- "I think that employer engagement still has to be a top priority. There are a lot of highly skilled New Canadians in the region's labour force, and employers need to tap into this local talent source."

Board of Directors' Planning Retreat

On Saturday, November 22, 2014, Board and senior staff members came together for a day-long retreat.

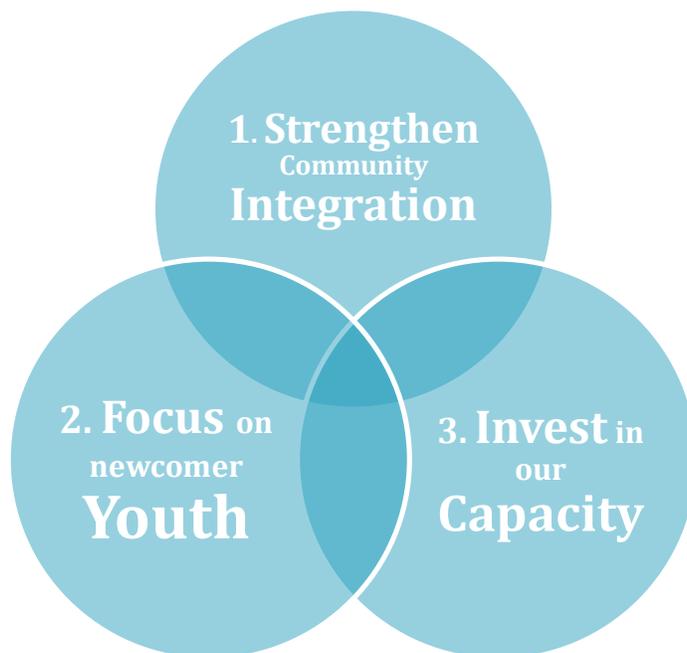
Leading up to the retreat session, the board reviewed stakeholder engagement carefully, reading through summaries of the focus groups and results of the online survey, including reviewing all of the 111 written comments in the survey open-ended response sections. Each member was asked to draw out themes and observations for discussion at the retreat.

The session began with a comprehensive environmental scan, where the board reviewed longer-term performance trends of NCC. The Executive Director then provided insight into trends occurring in settlement services and community integration work across Ontario. Policy and demographic shifts were also reviewed.

With this information in mind, the Board began to work through sorting and analyzing the most important strategic themes—emerging from all the planning inputs. Through a series of consensus-building exercises the Board, assisted by senior staff, identified three pillars on which to focus the organization's work over the next five years taking into account risks and opportunities before NCC.

NCC Strategic Directions: 2015 - 2020

NCC is committing to a five-year strategic plan. As such, the core directions are high-level and set the general strategy for the future. Throughout the planning process, it was important to the Board that the directions be clear yet broad enough to allow the organization to adapt and respond as circumstances change over the years ahead. The directions offer a framework, then, for the development of *annual* operational plans with measurable goals and objectives. These annual plans (not included as part of this document) will ensure that the strategic directions continue to "live" within the organization—consistently guiding action, but also evolving as necessary. Following are the three directions:



1. Strengthen Community Integration

Our role as a newcomer integration leader is to seed collaborations, localize successful initiatives from elsewhere in Canada, and demonstrate the tangible, positive impact new Canadians have in our community.

At NCC we are committed to supporting our region so it can realize all the benefits—social, environmental, economic, and cultural—of successfully integrating new Canadians.

We know diversity strengthens the social fabric of communities. It also deepens our economic resiliency. Attracting and retaining new Canadians is essential for a demographically aging community like ours. Newcomers will add to the base of skilled workers we need today, and tomorrow.

NCC supports integration of its clients by working with community stakeholders, including the Peterborough Partnership Council on Immigrant Integration (PPCII), to realize personal empowerment, full participation and the promotion of increased access to services, as well as employment and volunteer opportunities.

Our Commitments

Over the next five years, we commit to playing a visible leadership role in newcomer integration. We will make "Strengthening Community Integration" a priority by developing creative partnerships and collaborations, as well as by offering our expertise as trainers and educators. We will foster innovative initiatives to assist our municipalities, employers, and other community-based organizations to become more effective at attracting and helping newcomers settle into life and work, start businesses, and attend school, locally.

Our Actions

- Create annual inventories of our existing, and most desired, partnerships (with other community agencies, employers, or other groups); then prioritize and formalize those partnerships that set out roles, responsibilities, work plans and deliverables for each partner;
 - Pursue promising funding opportunities for project-based work, new program or service delivery, and community integration initiatives including our important work with PPCII;
 - Seek fresh ways to deliver information, education, and training on the many social and economic benefits of greater newcomer inclusion, acceptance, community diversity and integration.
 - Lead by setting an example through the active cultivation of a diverse and integration-positive culture at NCC. From Board to staff and volunteers, NCC will reflect the diversity and strength of skills and experience it promotes across the broader community.
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2. Focus on Newcomer Youth

At NCC we have identified newcomer youth as facing exceptional challenges that require a heightened response from NCC, and our community, over the next five years.

Their needs include:

- extra academic support and deeper guidance in their educational experience;
- a recognition of the unique circumstances and experiences of newcomer youth (e.g., culture shock, competing or inconsistent cultural expectations or standards);
- outreach and engagement that attracts and holds their interest, meets them "where they are" whether online or in person, and has the specialized psycho-social and settlement supports ready for when they are needed;
- training or assistance for teachers, school staff, coaches, faith-based leaders, community workers, friends, and others in the community who make up their circle.

Our Commitments

Over the next five years, we commit to our "Focus on Newcomer Youth" strategy by partnering with educational institutions and other youth-serving agencies to leverage and align supports in the region. We know early intervention in the settlement and education of children and youth is critical for successful settlement and integration. Newcomer youth at upper elementary, high school and post-secondary institutions, especially those with language barriers, do not always know how and where they can access help. NCC is committed to developing more supports to help young newcomers thrive in Canada.

Our Actions

- Seek funding, resources and partnerships to locally-develop high-impact services for newcomer youth.
 - Develop needed services through the formation of new and existing partnerships so that our relationships with schools (teachers, administrators and school boards) and post-secondary institutions deepen and, collectively, we are able to better reach and help newcomer youth;
 - Ensure high quality, locally-relevant information exists to better assist newcomer youth in our region (e.g., healthcare, employment, daily life, immigration, law, settlement, school);
 - Develop measures to track the impact and successes of our youth services work so we can monitor program performance over time;
 - Engage newcomer youth directly, and empower them to lead and shape the services and supports they require; and
 - Develop a community-based "high needs" response specifically tailored for newcomer youth.
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3. Invest in our Capacity

Our organization has a solid foundation of settlement services and community integration work on which to build. In fact, making smart, sustainable choices so we continue to grow in a managed way is essential if we are to serve newcomers with the compassion and expertise for which we are known. A sustainable charitable organization is one that manages its growth and invests in its own capacity. We believe that after 35 years of success, NCC can continue to grow to meet the needs of more new Canadians across our region.

Our Commitments

We are committed to strengthening our capacity to serve newcomers. To do so we must explore additional ways to diversify our funding base, develop a culture of philanthropy, hone our branding and marketing efforts, continue to build upon our solid base of volunteers, and recruit and retain diverse and highly skilled staff and board members. Finally, we are also committed to strengthening the appropriate administrative systems and processes to support our efforts.

Our Actions

- Identify new revenue opportunities, conduct feasibility studies and research, and create an implementation strategy on an annual basis (e.g., fundraising and philanthropy, social financing, corporate sponsorships, and/or social enterprise ventures);
 - Explore new government-funded programs and projects (delivered by NCC or in partnership with others), both through existing funders and from other ministries or levels of government.
 - Develop a process to assess and redesign client pathways so as to ensure that our all our clients (including those that are core-funded *and* those that fall outside existing program categories) continue to achieve the outcomes that they, and our funders, seek;
 - Strengthen our brand identity, along with an accompanying marketing and communications program, so NCC can meet the needs of those it serves in new and innovative ways, and to set the stage for future advocacy, partnership, program delivery, policy development, and philanthropic endeavours. In addition, through this we will address, and harmonize, individual program brands and the overarching NCC brand;
 - Define existing services offered across our catchment. Grow prudently into neighbouring counties, and serve an expanded catchment, where resources allow, and commitments to partners exist;
 - Respond to emerging local needs and pressures (e.g., ESL and Employment Services);
 - Recognize our staff and volunteers as our greatest strength. Continue to foster a healthy workplace culture with increased emphasis on communications and professional development opportunities;
 - Increase access by expanding or removing barriers to service;
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- Maintain, measure and report on our high-quality programs and service delivery outcomes in a transparent way.

Next Steps & Conclusion

In support of these strategic directions, the Board and management team will develop annual operational plans. Measurable goals and objectives will be outlined for each tactic to ensure they are in alignment with the directions.

Over the years, NCC has matured as an organization, growing and adapting along with the changing face of our community and broader region. With these vital strategies in place and an understanding of how to move forward operationally, NCC will ensure the organization's full potential is realized.

The Board (members are listed in the Appendix) will build on the foundation laid decades ago and strive for an even stronger future. We acknowledge the significant input offered by our partner organizations, clients, community, and NCC staff and volunteers. We have listened. Your voices will continue to guide us as we work to implement the plan.

The Board is excited to adopt this five-year strategic plan and to report on the progress of the organization over time. NCC is now well positioned to serve our clients, those among us who are new to Canada. We will help ensure that Canada becomes home—a place of safety and comfort for newcomers, a place that welcomes their equal and positive contributions.

Appendix A - Participants

Board of Directors 2014-2015

Carlie Arbour
Kelvin Chen
Lisa Clarke, Vice Chair
Jason Dennison
Rob Howard
Laura Keresztesi
Anna Lee
Wilco Overink, Treasurer
Sil Salvaterra, Chair
Jeff Westlake
Gabriele Zeh-Abramsky, Past-Chair

Staff Representatives

Hajni Hos, Executive Director
Grace Salalila, Finance Coordinator
Tamara Hoogerdyk, Settlement Services Coordinator
Jason Stabler, Partnership Council Coordinator

Partner Organization Participants

NCC benefited from, and is grateful for, the participation of the following organizations at our stakeholder consultation sessions:

1. United Way of Peterborough
 2. Fleming College
 3. Trent University
 4. YMCA Central Ontario
 5. Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
 6. Local Immigration Consultant
 7. Northumberland County
 8. County of Peterborough
 9. Peterborough Economic Development
 10. Peterborough Family Resource Centre
 11. Horizons of Friendship
 12. YWCA, Peterborough & Haliburton
 13. Peterborough Social Planning Council
 14. ScotiaBank, Peterborough Branch
 15. Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough
 16. Community and Race Relations Committee of Peterborough
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