

SETTLEMENT 2.0 PROJECT

Innovation is in our DNA



The immigrant and refugee-serving sector has become #suddenlyremote.
You have had to make decisions quickly to respond to the ever-changing environment.
Many of you have spent the last month learning, exploring, implementing,
and managing differently. How we respond now can have a profound impact
on how immigrant services are delivered now and in the future.

While the current moment presents profound challenges for individuals and organizations serving newcomers, this moment also presents an enormous opportunity to push for innovations that can help strengthen the settlement sector long after the COVID-19 crisis subsides.

In 2019, PeaceGeeks embarked on an IRCC SDI funded initiative - the Settlement 2.0 Project - to develop a vision and action plan for exploring how technology and innovation can best facilitate settlement outcomes for supporting newcomers. We worked with the sector to understand the pre-conditions necessary for effective change, and how the sector can embrace technology and innovation in service delivery and strategic principles.

Our report "Settlement 2.0 Project: Innovation is in our DNA" is ready for release. The timing couldn't be more serendipitous.

What we found is immediately relevant. Implementing a Settlement 2.0 vision requires investments of resources, support, skills, different funding structures and relationships, trust, space, and time. In order to build the service capacity for a new and emerging Settlement 2.0 ecosystem, the sector and its core funder need to fully explore what Maytree's Alan Broadbent has referred to as the "Three I's of Immigrant Integration:" intentionality, instruments, and investments.

Language used to describe innovation (both in describing IRCC's CORE Principles and by civic tech and other innovation actors), such as client-centric, co-creation, openness, transparency, empowering communities, addressing vulnerability, and knowledge sharing is directly connected to the immigrant and refugee-serving sector's principles and values in service provision, program development, and system change. The sector's foundation for innovation is already in place.

IRCC is likely looking at how services being delivered during the pandemic will impact the sector's future and how the sector is funded. You are likely already pondering this question at the agency and sector level.

Our recommendations are intended to spark conversations about innovation, technology, program design, and ensure positive newcomer settlement outcomes that move the sector to action. We invite you to read our recommendations to IRCC and work together with the sector's main funder to explore and identify how best to facilitate this change in greater detail moving forward.

THE TIME FOR THAT CONVERSATION IS NOW.