

# Social Work Education in the Newcomer Settlement Sector

## An Annotated Bibliography 2021



Transforming the Field  
Education Landscape

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's (SSHRC) partnership grant program, aims to better prepare the next generation of social workers in Canada by creating training and mentoring opportunities for students, developing and mobilizing innovative and promising field education practices, and improving the integration of research and practice in field education.

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## METHODS

The purpose of this annotated bibliography is to gain a better understanding of social work field education in newcomer settlement sector and social work education and how it may prepare social workers for working with newcomers/immigrants. The University of Calgary online system was utilized for this literature search. The titles and abstracts of each article were read, and 14 articles were deemed relevant for this social work field education in the newcomer settlement sector annotated bibliography.

### Database Search, Keywords and Modifications

Database	Keywords	Search Modifications
Academic Search Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Social work education or training or curriculum" AND "newcomers or immigrants"</li> <li>• "Social work education" AND "immigrants or newcomers" AND "Canada"</li> <li>• "Social work" AND "serving immigrants or newcomers" And "Canada"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011-2021</li> <li>• English Language</li> <li>• Peer Reviewed</li> </ul>
CINAHL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Social work education or training or curriculum" AND "newcomers or immigrants"</li> <li>• "Social work education" AND "immigrants or newcomers" AND "Canada"</li> <li>• "Social work" AND "serving immigrants or newcomers" And "Canada"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011-2021</li> <li>• English Language</li> <li>• Peer Reviewed</li> </ul>
Google Scholar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Social work field education in the newcomer settlement sector"</li> <li>• "Social work in Canada working with immigrant sector"</li> <li>• "Social work education" "immigrants" "Canada"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2000-2021</li> <li>• 2011-2021</li> </ul>
Social Work Abstracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Social work education or training or curriculum" AND "newcomers or immigrants"</li> <li>• "Social work education" AND "immigrants or newcomers" AND "Canada"</li> <li>• "Social work" AND "serving immigrants or newcomers" And "Canada"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011-2021</li> <li>• English Language</li> <li>• Peer Reviewed</li> </ul>
SocINDEX with Fulltext	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Social work education or training or curriculum" AND "newcomers or immigrants"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011-2021</li> <li>• English language</li> <li>• Peer Reviewed</li> </ul>

Database	Keywords	Search Modifications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Social work education" AND "immigrants or newcomers" AND "Canada"</li> <li>• "Social work" AND "serving immigrants or newcomers" And "Canada"</li> </ul>	
University of Calgary Quick Search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Newcomer or immigrants" AND "social work*" AND "settlement sector or immigrant services or newcomer services or immigrant serving sector or newcomer serving sector" AND "practicum or placements or field education"</li> <li>• "Newcomer" AND "social work*" AND "settlement sector" AND "practicum or placements or field practicum"</li> <li>• "Social work field education in the newcomer settlement sector"</li> <li>• "Social work field education" AND "immigrant settlement"</li> <li>• "Newcomer immigrants" AND "social work" AND "field education or field practicum"</li> <li>• "Social work education" AND "immigrants"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2001-2021</li> <li>• 2011-2021</li> <li>• English Language</li> <li>• Peer Reviewed</li> </ul>

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bhuyan, R., Park, Y., & Rundle, A. (2012). Linking practitioners' attitudes towards and basic knowledge of immigrants with their social work education. *Social Work Education, 31*(8), 973–994.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2011.621081>

Based on a survey of 1,124 social workers in the United States, this article examines how practitioners' attitudes towards immigrants and their general knowledge of immigration varied according to the content of their social work education. Although the majority of practitioners reported receiving coursework on practice with immigrants, this showed no effect on their attitudes or knowledge. In contrast, coursework on immigration policy predicted more favorable attitudes towards immigrants. Considering the mounting anti-immigrant sentiment and retrenchment of immigrants' rights in the United States, the results suggest the need to further explore what course work content is needed to prepare social workers for the current needs of the field. We argue that social work education must expand upon existing cultural competence models of practice with immigrants, to better prepare social to address the deepening social exclusion of undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Clarke, J., & Wan, E. (2011). Transforming Settlement Work. *Critical Social Work, 12*(1).

<https://doi.org/10.22329/csw.v12i1.5842>

Today, the concept of anti-oppression is prevalent in social work education, research, policy, and practice. However, it is a relatively new concept in the settlement sector, and little is known about its application in settlement work. In this article, two social workers provide their critical analysis and reflections of anti-oppression work with newcomer youth in schools. Drawing on the literature and their experiences, the authors contend that the current approach to settlement work with newcomer youth is rooted in colonialism and racism, and

they propose an anti-oppression approach as a new way for settlement workers to work with newcomer youth.

Davis, C., Harris, N., Engelbrecht, L., & Lum, T. (2019). Teaching international social work in a global classroom. *Journal of Social Work Education, 55*(2), 327–337.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2018.1526731>

Social work educators are challenged with preparing students for international social work and working with immigrant and refugee populations. This pilot project aimed to develop an online global classroom to teach an international social work course to social work students participating from five different locations: United States (N=25), South Africa (N=4), Mexico (N=11), Hong Kong (N=6), and Australia (N=2). Qualitative data were collected from students regarding their experiences in this global classroom. Thematic analysis revealed the development of rich authentic learning, where their interactions with international classmates led to a transformative learning experience and a beginning sense of social work in a global context. Implications for future leaning and teaching of social work content across global borders are discussed.

Drolet, J. (2012). Reflecting on field education partnerships on migration and immigration: A Canadian perspective. *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping, 18*(2), 87–91.

There is growing interest in social work education to consider migration and immigration policies and practice. Based on reflections on my experience as a field education coordinator in Canada, this article contends that social work education needs to consider field placements in immigrant-serving agencies and organizations, as a way of developing new knowledge and practice to address social exclusion in society.

Held, M. L., Cuellar, M. J., & Cook H., L. (2018). A study of social work students' knowledge and perceptions of stages of Latino immigration. *Journal of Social Work Education, 54*(1), 61–78.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2017.1307148>

Latino immigrants encounter distinct hardships at each stage of the immigration process, including stressors that occur in the home countries, during travel, and on settlement, which correspond with poorer mental health status. Yet, much of social work education and service delivery centers only on post settlement needs. This exploratory study provides descriptive data on 194 social work students' experiences with and perceptions of Latino immigration and analyzes how students' perceived preparedness to work with Latino immigrants corresponds with their knowledge of hardships during each immigration stage. Findings suggest that students felt moderately prepared to work with immigrants and that perceived preparedness was positively associated with familiarity of immigration stage stressors. Implications for social work education, practice, and research are presented.

Lin, C-H., & Wiley, A. R. (2019). Enhancing the practice of immigrant child welfare social workers in the United States. *International Social Work, 62*(2), 595–611.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872817742697>

Responding to the needs of growing immigrant populations, many US social service sectors have recruited bilingual and bicultural practitioners, including immigrants. However, little is known about the immigrant social workers. This article explores the practice context of immigrant child welfare social workers in the United States. First, acculturation theory is applied to frame the experiences of US immigrants. Second, we explore professional development of practitioners working with immigrant families. Third, we discuss the intersectionality connecting immigration and social work professionalization. We conclude

that the immigration and acculturation experiences of immigrant social workers are unique strengths for working with immigrant populations.

Martinez-Brawley, E. E., & Zorita, P. M.-B. (2011). Immigration and social work: Contrasting practice and education. *Social Work Education*, 30(1), 17–28.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2010.481791>

This article will argue that the lack of immigration content in the training of social workers, particularly macro content related to the legal, economic/labor, and regulatory context, affects the ability of practitioners to serve their immigrant clients. A broad spectrum of social work theoretical discourses is suggested as a desirable background for training in the area of immigration. Reference is made to the importance of experience and the need to incorporate anti-oppressive practices in an area often fraught by a law enforcement mentality. The term immigrant is used here to refer to individuals who arrive in a country seeking work and a better quality of life, whether considered 'legal or illegal', 'documented or undocumented' by the receiving country. While there are important differences between immigrants and refugees, much of what is discussed here in relation to immigrants can also be helpful in working with and training practitioners to serve refugees.

McPherson, J., Villarreal-Otálora, T., & Kobe, D. (2021). Injustice in their midst: Social work students' awareness of immigration-based discrimination in higher education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 57(1), 55–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2019.1670303>

Social work ethics oppose discriminatory practices and policies, yet little is known about social work students' awareness of such discrimination. In some U.S. states, education policies discriminate against undocumented youth and recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, by limiting access to higher education or imposing prohibitive fees. This survey-based study measures undergraduate social work students' knowledge regarding immigration-based



educational discrimination and assesses their understanding of how social work's ethical mandates require them to respond. Most respondents, 83.4%, agreed that it is segregation to exclude such students from the university, but 25% were unaware of discriminatory practices within their own university. Limited knowledge leaves students ill-prepared to advocate for immigrant rights. Authors include recommendations for educators on enhancing awareness.

Sethi, B. (2015). Education and employment training supports for newcomers to Canada's middle-sized urban/rural regions: Implications for social work practice. *Journal of Social Work, 15*(2), 138–161. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1177/1468017313504795>

The last decade has witnessed the movement of immigrants from Canada's largest urban centers—Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal—to smaller urban-rural communities.

Nevertheless, very little scholarship exists on newcomer integration in these communities.

Furthermore, social work literature examining the perspective of service providers who work with newcomers is lacking. Grand Erie is a middle-sized urban/rural region in Ontario, Canada that is experiencing increased migration of newcomers. This paper focuses on a part of a larger Community-based participatory research on 'Newcomer Settlement and Integration in Education, Training, Employment, Health and Social Support' in Grand Erie and discusses the findings in the education and training domain. Data were gathered from 212 newcomers (men and women) and 237 service providers using survey questionnaires.

Sethi, B. (2013). Newcomers' health in Brantford and the counties of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk: Perspectives of newcomers and service providers. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health, 15*(5), 925–931. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-012-9675-6>

The Canadian government's plan to support a balanced distribution of immigrants throughout the nation has contributed to newcomers' dispersion to small town communities and rural

areas. However, very little work has examined the health experiences of immigrants settling in smaller urban and rural regions. Even less literature exists on the perspectives of service providers working with newcomers in Canada's urban–rural communities. This paper focuses on a part of a larger Community-based study on 'Newcomer Settlement and Integration in Education, Training, Employment, Health and Social Support' in Brantford—a middle-sized urban/rural region in Ontario, Canada—and discusses the findings in the health domain. Data were generated from 212 service providers and 237 newcomers using both qualitative and quantitative research tools. Newcomers identified several barriers in accessing mental and/or physical health services including lack of culturally appropriate services and discrimination. The striking differences between newcomers' and service providers' responses to the survey questionnaires bring to light cultural variations between the newcomers' and the service providers' perceptions of 'health'. The findings reinforce the need for including newcomers in developing more inclusive and culturally-appropriate health services and programs.

Shields, J., Drolet, J., & Valenzuela Moreno, K. A. (2016). Immigrant settlement and integration services and the role of non-profit service providers: a cross-national perspective on trends, issues and evidence.

<http://delivery.canadianelectroniclibrary.ca/PDFDelivery.aspx?a=dd6c29d3-110f-4a3a-8b21-1496dd73d542&b=5376c15f-1cdf-4c6f-9a7f-33fe2d403971&i=y>

The primary purpose of this paper is to offer a relevant comparative context for considering settlement and integration service delivery and the role of non-profits in working with government as well as the communities they serve in the promotion of immigrant well-being. Settlement and integration services provide various forms of support and assistance to immigrant populations which help newcomers get established in, and meet their core needs/requirements for their adaption into their new homeland, and ultimately to become

citizens of that country. Making use of a broad cross-national comparison of experiences, approaches and programming in newcomer settlement, we seek to provide a wider context from which to reflect on the Canadian case.

Türegün, A. (2013). Immigrant settlement work in Canada: Limits and possibilities for professionalization. *The Canadian Review of Sociology*, 50(4), 387–411.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/cars.12025>

This paper portrays the emergence of Canadian settlement work with immigrants and explores its prospects as an occupation. Currently, settlement work includes three forms of practice: (1) a loose occupation; (2) a specialty of social work; and (3) an emerging profession. The paper argues that settlement work is likely to have a professional future. However, whether or not it will become an independent profession depends largely on the funding regime of the settlement service sector. If the existing federal and short-term funding regime continues, settlement work will still be trying to define itself in the broader field of social service work. If a provincial and long-term funding regime emerges, prospects for an independent professional settlement work will improve.

Valtonen, K. (2008). *Social Work and Migration: Immigrant and Refugee Settlement and Integration* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315609669>

Social work increasingly finds itself at the frontline of issues pertaining to immigrant and refugee settlement and integration. In this timely book, Kathleen Valtonen provides the first book-length study on the challenges these issues create for the profession. Drawing on a wide range of research in migration which is not widely available to social workers or included in social work literature, she offers readers an opportunity to explore the capacity of the profession to take a primary role in the course and outcome of settlement. The book fills a gap in the social work literature by providing scholars, practitioners and students with a critical

knowledge base that will strengthen their ability to engage with issues of immigration and integration and to open up options for effective practice with growing numbers of immigrant and refugee clients.

Yan, M. C. (2011). Are social workers ready to work with newcomers? *Canadian Social Work*. 12, 170-175.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280600127\\_Are\\_social\\_workers\\_ready\\_to\\_work\\_with\\_newcomers?enrichId=rgreq-2160c7c2e95be59db2faf297301e1c4a-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzI4MDYwMDEyNztBUzo0MzA5MjE4OTI1MzYzMjFAMTQ3OTc1MTE5MzQyMg%3D%3D&el=1\\_x\\_2&\\_esc=publicationCoverPdf](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280600127_Are_social_workers_ready_to_work_with_newcomers?enrichId=rgreq-2160c7c2e95be59db2faf297301e1c4a-XXX&enrichSource=Y292ZXJQYWdlOzI4MDYwMDEyNztBUzo0MzA5MjE4OTI1MzYzMjFAMTQ3OTc1MTE5MzQyMg%3D%3D&el=1_x_2&_esc=publicationCoverPdf)

Newcomers, who constitute a major driving force of Canadian population growth, face numerous challenges both before and after they reach this country<sup>1</sup>. The unique status of “being new to Canada” that is reserved to immigrants and refugees has received insufficient attention in the social work profession; the racial and cultural backgrounds of those who arrive in the country have not been adequately explored. This article reports the findings of an exploratory survey conducted on a group of self-selected members of the British Columbia Association of Social Workers about their perception of their state of readiness to serve newcomers. The findings signal that the social work profession may be less than fully prepared to serve newcomers effectively. Observations related to social work education are outlined and suggestions are made about the practice of the profession.

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