The Whole-of-Society Approach and Social Resilience: The Cases of Advocacy and Collaboration & Partnership
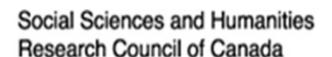
John Shields (Toronto Metropolitan University)

Panel: ***Highlights of BMRC-IRMU Research***

BMRC-IRMU Final Partnership Meeting/Conference

Université du Québec en Outaouais, Gatineau, Quebec, Canada, October 12, 2023

Building Migrant Resilience in Cities Immigration et résilience en milieu urbain

YORK UNIVERSITÉ UNIVERSITY

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

BMRC IRMU

Whole-of Society Approach

- Emerged out of a shift in policy circles to discussions of the idea of governance and whole-of-government thinking in 1990s.

- The Canadian reality of shared jurisdiction (feds and provinces) over immigration, the 'Canadian model of settlement' (delivery through nonprofit agencies) and inherent local nature of settlement & integration (municipalities and neighborhoods), play to the logic of whole-of-society.

- The social resilience approach is centred within a broader whole-of-society perspective because it is about understanding the various sources, formal and informal, that support resilience stretching from individuals/families to civil society/nonprofit organizations/neighborhoods through to government supports and policies at all levels (federal, provincial, regional, local/municipal). It is about the network of supports that work to build resilience, security and empowerment for newcomer populations.

- The whole-of-society perspective & social resilience approach also gives recognition to the structures within society and one's/migrants' position within the social hierarchy and the relationships that give shape to those relationships.

- There are not a static set of institutions and relationships but are ones that are dynamic and able to be altered through human action.

- The transformational qualities and possibilities embodied in this approach stand out as a defining feature of social resilience.

Advocacy and Collaboration & Partnership

- The advocacy role of ISAs and migrants is central because it constitutes the voice & representative element and a force for transformation and achieving social justice.

- Resilience is not just about "bouncing back" but about the possibilities of "bounding forward" (Golubchikov and DeVeuil 2021) ('radical resilience').

BMRC
IRMU

- For ISAs advocacy needs to be brought back into a more prominent position along side service (to support and represent the interests and voice of migrants is part of the mission of ISAs). Advocacy is good service!

- There are many forms of advocacy both hard and soft, and different parts of the settlement sector have roles with respect to advocacy (Umbrella organizations, LIPs, ISAs …). We need empowerment of both the sector and migrants.

- Developments during the pandemic showed the power of collaboration and partnership over competition.

- The need to build true partnership with funders (and move away from the governance of New Public Management) and cross-sector collaborations.

- There is a need to embrace the ethos of co-operation for common goals over the ethos of competition.

BMRC
IRMU