



**Sport for Life**

# New-to-Canada Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Pathway 1.0





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# New-to-Canada Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Pathway 1.0

## CONCEPT PAPER

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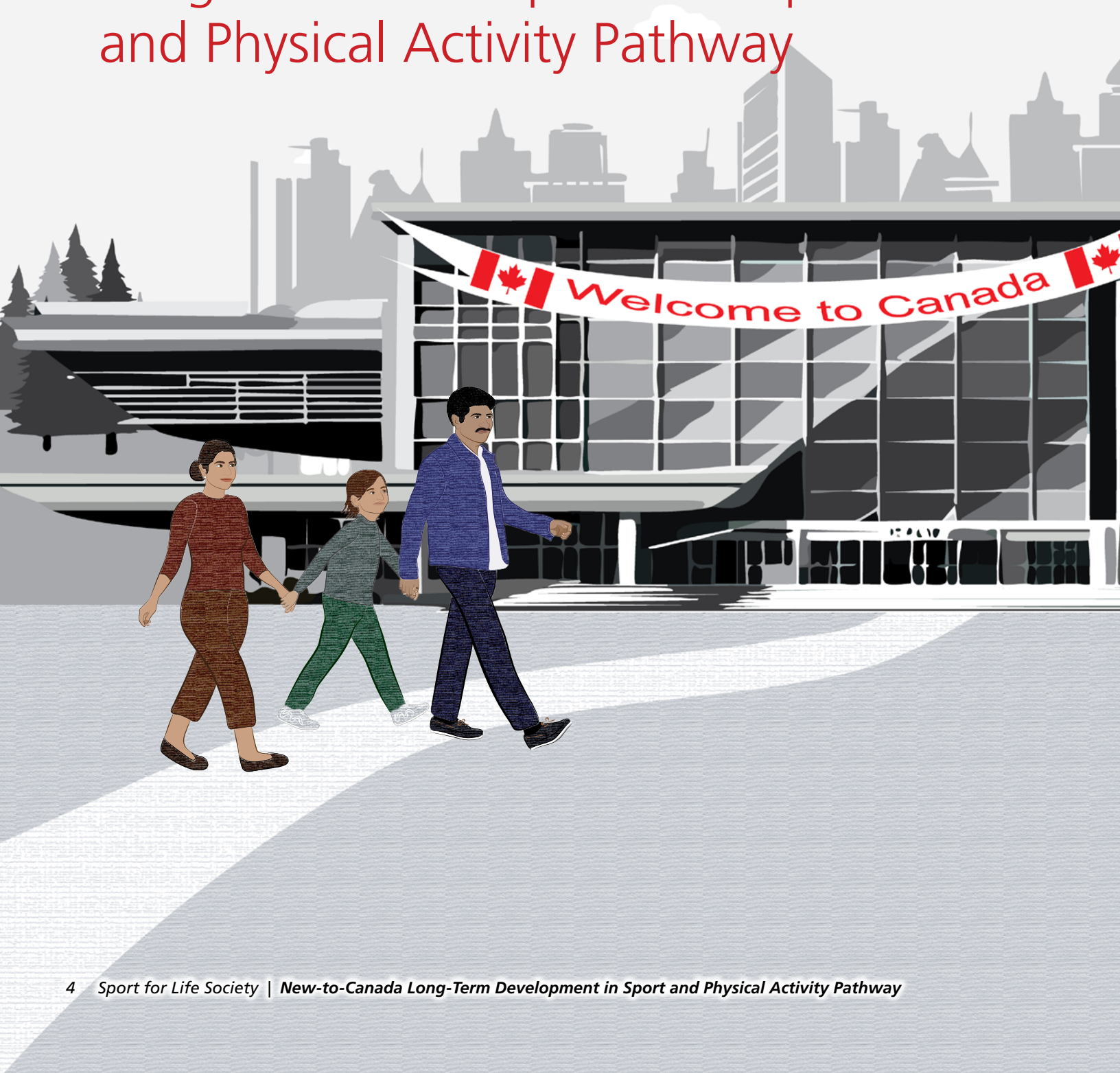
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# Section One

## Purpose of the New-to-Canada Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Pathway





# Preface

The *New-to-Canada Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Pathway* (NLTD) is a strategic and inclusive resource designed for invested partners to support new-to-Canada participants in their journey through sport and physical activity. This guide aims to assist two primary partner groups—those who support new-to-Canada participants upon their arrival to Canada and through their subsequent settlement process, and the sport and physical activity organizations that seek to welcome and include new-to-Canada participants within their programs. Through collaboration and a shared goal of new-to-Canada inclusion, these invested partners work together to **foster social cohesion, enhance health and wellness, and establish community connection**, which directly align with key immigration and resettlement outcomes—all while **strengthening the sport and physical activity sectors**.

Between March 2024 and April 2025, the NLTD was conceptualized, developed, and refined through a collaborative and evidence-informed process. Building on the foundation of *Sport for Life's Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Framework*, and incorporating learnings from the *Indigenous Long-Term Participant Development Pathway* (co-created with the Aboriginal Sport Circle), Sport for Life created an internal draft tailored to the new-to-Canada participant experience.

This draft underwent a comprehensive review by experts across the fields of immigration, resettlement, sport, physical activity and recreation, and academia. Their insights were instrumental in shaping a resource that is both meaningful and practical.

The NLTD concept was presented at several major national conferences, including:

- Metropolis Identities (Vancouver, Oct. 2024)
- Coaching Association of Canada's Sport Leadership Conference (Regina, Nov. 2024)
- 2025 Sport for Life Summit (Gatineau, Jan. 2025)
- Metropolis Immigration Conference (Toronto, Mar. 2025)

At these events, we engaged directly with coaches, researchers, academics, practitioners, and community leaders to gather feedback and ensure the NLTD meets the diverse needs of those working with new-to-Canada populations. Additionally, one-on-one virtual and in-person feedback sessions were hosted with local sport organizations and Local Immigrant Partnerships.

This resource includes interactive features such as fillable checklists, templates, and tables to ensure adaptability across different organizational and community settings. It is grounded in current evidence and data across the sport, health, immigration, and physical activity sectors.

The NLTD aims to empower the invested partners in a new-to-Canada participant's journey: the specific goal is to ensure new-to-Canada participants have the opportunity to flourish in Canada through participation in sport and physical activity, while the broader goals are for these individuals to experience overall personal development and for communities to blossom through inclusion, which together will benefit the nation.



# Introduction

In the past, Canada has welcomed high immigration numbers to keep its economy strong.<sup>1</sup> The country has one of the world's oldest populations and also one of the world's lowest birth rates.<sup>2</sup> This creates economic and fiscal pressures. Canada has a low rate of natural population growth which results in low rates of labour force and economic growth. Low economic growth makes it difficult for Canada to raise the taxes it needs to support social spending on services such as education, health care, and other important areas that provide high living standards in the country.

As a result, Canada has been increasing its immigration numbers since the late 1980s to increase its rate of population, labour force, and economic growth. Canada now depends on immigration for the majority of its population and labour force growth and a larger share of its economic growth. For example, in 2022 international students contributed \$30.9 billion to Canada's GDP.<sup>3</sup>

Just as immigration influences the economy and transforms cities across Canada, it also plays a pivotal role in shaping the **sport and physical activity** landscape. Immigration can lead to an increase in overall participation levels; it can result in more individuals with a wide range of highly developed skills and talents entering the sport system; and it can foster cultural exchange and understanding. But with these positive

outcomes (of which this list is just a few), so too come barriers that require targeted solutions to ensure accessibility, inclusivity, and integration. By addressing these barriers and leveraging the opportunities, Canada can continue to build a vibrant sport and physical activity culture that benefits as well as reflects all of its residents.

One of the realities that the system will face is that some sports that have been traditionally popular in Canada may see their participation levels decline, while other sports and physical activities, of which new-to-Canada participants are familiar, may grow in popularity, such as with cricket. This growth will occur *especially* if the organizations that oversee these sports and physical activities choose to expand their programming to meet the needs of these new Canadians. Regardless of participation numbers, it is indeed the responsibility of all sport and physical activity leaders to ensure that the system is accessible and welcoming to everyone in Canada. All invested partners must become familiar with, and empathetic to, the unique circumstances that prevent some new-to-Canada participants from fully participating in sport and physical activity.

1 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2025: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/immigration-matters/track-record.html>

2 Employment and Social Development Canada, 2025: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/seniors-forum-federal-provincial-territorial/older-worker-participation.html>

3 Global Affairs Canada, 2022: <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/impact-2022/sec-6.aspx?lang=eng>



The term “**New-to-Canada participant**” used throughout this document refers to both **newcomers** and **new citizens to Canada**.

- **Newcomers to Canada** are non-citizens who have been granted the right to live in Canada permanently or temporarily by federal immigration authorities.

**Newcomers** have entered Canada through various immigration pathways, following the legal means through which they can remain in Canada, and typically have been in the country for **less than five years**. They include but are not limited to:

- immigrants,
- refugees,
- international students,
- temporary foreign workers,
- permanent residents, and
- visitors.

An individual’s immigration status can be temporary or permanent—it is important to keep this in mind to ensure collective approaches and programming meet the specific needs of each individual.

- **New Citizens to Canada** are immigrants who have been in Canada for **at least three years** and have attained Canadian citizenship.

Regardless of an individual’s citizenship status, and regardless of whether they have only just arrived in Canada or been in the country for several years, they may feel and identify as still being new-to-Canada. This is why we use “new-to-Canada participants” to include and consider everyone on this pathway.

*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has a comprehensive glossary of immigration-related words and terms. You can find the full glossary here:*

*<https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/17f69360-123a-4bd2-8eef-bba94468071f>.*



## Immigration Background

### Massive immigration – migration trends to Canada<sup>1</sup>

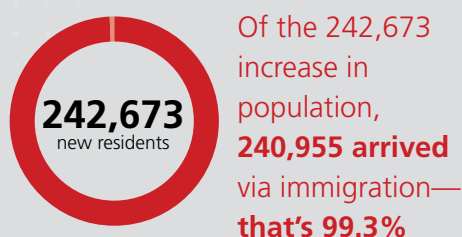
Canada has reached another population milestone and it’s almost entirely due to immigration. According to the latest data from Statistics Canada, as of April 1, 2024, the population passed 41 million people (41,012, 563).<sup>2</sup> For context, the population hit a record 40 million in June 2023.

1 UNHCR’s Refugees in Canada Report: <https://www.unhcr.ca/in-canada/refugees-in-canada/>  
UNHCR’s Global Trends Report, 2022: <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/global-trends-report-2022.pdf>

2 Statistics Canada, 2024: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240619/dq240619a-eng.htm>



Nearly a quarter of that growth during that time range (242,673 people) arrived in Canada between January and April 2024, or a quarterly increase to Canada's total population of 0.6%. Of these, 240,955 people arrived through permanent and temporary immigration pathways.



The **2024-2026 Immigration Levels Plan** was set to welcome approximately 500,000 immigrants in 2024 with plans to rise to 520,000 in 2025 and 2026, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

In October of 2024 a new **Immigration Levels Plan 2025-2027** was issued which has reduced targets for the next three years (2025—2027), with an overall projection set to 395,000 admissions in 2025; 380,000 in 2026; and 365,000 in 2027.<sup>2</sup>

1 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2023: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2024-2026.html>

2 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2024: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/10/20252027-immigration-levels-plan.html>

New-to-Canada participants often prioritize their basic needs (e.g. securing housing, finding employment, enrolling children in school), which can be a long process that impedes their inclusion into communities. Many may struggle to find a place in Canada well after they arrive, and sport and physical activity can be an important vehicle for helping them connect with their new communities and feel that they belong. Because of this, it is imperative that sport and physical activity be easy to access and as barrier-free as possible.

Over the next three years (2025–2027), Canada will aim to welcome roughly one million immigrants.<sup>4</sup> The NLTD strives to provide a roadmap for new-to-Canada participants by aligning immigration objectives with the benefits of physical activity and sport.

This guide has been informed by Sport for Life's foundational documents, such as *Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) 1.0*, *LTAD 2.0*, *Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity (LTD) 3.0*, *Quality Sport for Communities and Clubs*, *Indigenous Long-Term Participant Development*, and *No Accidental Champions*, to become a supplementary resource to complement this pre-existing work and that aligns with the Long-Term Development framework as a whole. This resource outlines a stage-by-stage approach to improve the inclusion of new-to-Canada participants within Canada's sport and physical activity ecosystem, which will also support integration into society. The resource applies the *Seven Guiding Principles of Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity* stage-by-stage developmental guidelines, and other recommendations to ensure alignment.

4 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2024: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2025-2027.html>



# Who This Resource Is For

This *New-to-Canada Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Pathway* (NLTD) does just that—it maps out a pathway for sport and physical activity involvement for new-to-Canada participants through all stages of life. The NLTD is designed for two primary audiences: those who support new-to-Canada participants to settle in Canada, and the organizations and facilities that provide quality sport and physical activity opportunities for these participants once they are in Canada.

- **Those who support new-to-Canada participants** (include but are not limited to):

- settlement agencies,
- newcomer serving agencies,
- ethnocultural organizations,
- intercultural associations, and
- faith centres.

- **Sport and physical activity organizations** (include but are not limited to):

- community organizations that offer active games and informal sports,
- schools that deliver PE classes and school sport,
- local sport clubs,
- provincial/territorial sport organizations oversee sport delivery in their provinces and territories, and
- national sport organizations that oversee their sport delivery across the country.



# Benefits of Using This Resource

This resource provides guidance to those organizations that support new-to-Canada participants to navigate and access sports and physical activity opportunities in Canada, as well as to those organizations responsible for the meaningful and effective inclusion of new-to-Canada participants into the Canadian sport and physical activity ecosystem. Here's how these organizations will benefit from this resource:

## For those Who Support New-to-Canada Participants

### Understand the Canadian Sport and Physical Activity Ecosystem

- Learn how new-to-Canada participants can access sports programs and also how community sports, municipal recreation programs, and school sports work in Canada.
- Understand the opportunities that exist for new-to-Canada families and how best to support them in finding the right programs to match their interests and abilities.

### Overcome Barriers

- Discover practical strategies to address the common challenges that new-to-Canada participants face when trying to access sport and physical activity, such as language barriers or unfamiliarity with Canadian sports.
- Determine and share tips on accessing culturally inclusive and affordable sports programs.

### Help New-to-Canada Participants Find Their Pathway

- Use the *New-to-Canada Participation Pathway* section to help new-to-Canada participants identify activities for all ages and

stages, from young children first starting out (Active Start) to older adults seeking lifelong engagement (Active for Life).

- Understand how sport and physical activity can contribute to personal growth, language acquisition, and community integration, and share those learnings.

### Discover Support

- Access additional information on settlement agencies, volunteer opportunities, and cultural associations to help new-to-Canada participants connect with sports programs suited to them.
- Use and share resources to help new-to-Canada participants find inclusive sports programs and connect with local mentors or coaches who understand their journey

### Leverage Additional Resources

- Explore the resources and external links to deepen your understanding of Canadian sports and physical activity culture.
- Share feedback to help improve inclusivity and relevance for others.

## For Sport and Physical Activity Organizations

### Build Understanding

- Gain insights into the experiences, strengths, and challenges of new-to-Canada participants through real-life examples and case studies.

- Use the *Seven Guiding Principles of Long-Term Development* to align your programs with inclusive and developmentally appropriate practices.



### Enhance Accessibility

- Identify barriers such as language, cultural differences, or financial constraints that limit new-to-Canada participation and apply recommended strategies to overcome them.
- Use the section on inclusive sports programs to tailor offerings that resonate with diverse communities.

### Develop Culturally and Developmentally Appropriate Pathways

- Learn ways to connect with, recruit and mentor—while also learning from and utilizing the experience of—coaches from newcomer communities.
- Promote the details within the Long-Term Development framework to support participants of all ages and stages, from beginners to high-performance athletes.

### Foster Community Integration

- Collaborate with intercultural organizations, settlement agencies, and local leaders to create welcoming environments.
- Encourage cultural exchange by introducing and supporting sports popular in new-to-Canada participants' home countries.

### Incorporate Feedback and Metrics

- Use the evaluation frameworks provided to measure the impact of your initiatives on new-to-Canada participants engagement and retention.
- Share success stories to inspire others and contribute to a growing body of inclusive practices in Canadian sport and physical activity.

By using this resource, those who support new-to-Canada participants as well as Canadian sport and physical activity organizations can work together to build a welcoming, inclusive, and dynamic sport and physical activity culture in Canada.



### Onward Migration

Onward migration—immigrants leaving Canada—is increasing among more recent cohorts of immigrants, which suggests immigrants may not be seeing the benefits of moving to Canada.<sup>1</sup>

A new survey by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship is shedding light on a worrying reality that newcomers likely experienced a sense of isolation both during and in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The survey found that 87.3% of respondents strongly agree (59.7%) or somewhat agree (27.6%) that participating in activities that make them feel comfortable and welcome increases their sense of belonging and connection to Canada.<sup>2</sup> The shutdowns and limited opportunities to take part in social activities would therefore have resulted in feelings of isolation and a lack of belonging.

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2023: [https://inclusion.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/print-the-leaky-bucket\\_2023.pdf](https://inclusion.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/print-the-leaky-bucket_2023.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2023: <https://inclusion.ca/article/canoo-survey-newcomers-isolated-recreational-activities/>



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) says the introduction of temporary residents in the Plan will act as a “soft cap” for temporary residents such as those on work permits, study permits or temporary resident (visitor) visas.<sup>1</sup> These changes are being implemented in response to growing pressure on Canada’s healthcare system and the impact of a rapidly growing population on housing affordability. Canada’s government has also noted that support for high levels of immigration has plunged in the past year. According to the Environics Institute, support for immigration in Canada was at its highest levels ever in 2022 and then dropped nearly 20% in 2023.<sup>2</sup>

1 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2024: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/09/strengthening-temporary-residence-programs-for-sustainable-volumes.html>

2 Environics Institute, 2024: <https://www.environicsinstitute.org/projects/project-details/canadian-public-opinion-about-immigration-and-refugees---fall-2024>

# Opportunities from Taking an NLTD Approach

Effective Canadian immigration plans provide opportunities for many sectors. Wide-ranging opportunities present themselves when new-to-Canada participants have access to and are included in sport and physical activity. They benefit not just new-to-Canada participants themselves, but also the programs, organizations and communities that strive for inclusion of those who are new to Canada. Here are many of the available opportunities:

## For those Who Support New-to-Canada Participants

### Building Social and Community Connections

- Participating in sports allows immigrants to build relationships with people in their communities, reducing isolation and fostering a sense of belonging. Strong social networks are crucial for emotional well-being and can discourage onward migration.
- Sports and physical activities that respect and incorporate diverse cultural practices into their programming can help new-to-Canada participants feel welcomed and valued in Canada, which in turn can benefit their communities through such areas as improved cultural awareness and opportunities for more diverse cultural activities and events.

### Enhancing Mental and Physical Well-being

- Physical activity is proven to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation, which are common challenges faced by new-to-Canada participants during the settlement process.<sup>5</sup>

5 Public Health Agency of Canada, 2018: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/lets-get-moving.html>





- Accessible sport programs can encourage new-to-Canada participants to lead healthier lives, which will likely contribute to their overall satisfaction with life in Canada.

### Economic and Career Benefits

- Sports teach transferable skills such as teamwork, leadership, and communication, which can benefit new-to-Canada participants in the workplace.
- While there are some restrictions to volunteering for new-to-Canada participants<sup>6</sup>, engaging in community sports can lead to roles as coaches, officials, or administrators, providing career pathways and potential financial stability.

### Fostering Inclusion and Belonging

- Participation in sport can help break down cultural and linguistic barriers, creating shared experiences that foster unity.
- Inclusive sport initiatives help address issues of racism and discrimination, creating a safer and more welcoming environment for those who are new.

<sup>6</sup> Immigration Law Centre, 2023: <https://canadian-visa-lawyer.com/is-it-work-or-volunteering-when-do-you-need-a-work-permit-in-canada/#:~:text=If%20everyone%20else%20in%20the,from%20a%20reputable%20immigration%20professional>



Quality sport and physical activity programs can play a significant role in helping retain immigrants in Canada by addressing key factors that influence onward migration, such as social integration, mental and physical health, and a sense of belonging. Collaboration between sports organizations and immigrant agencies is key to retaining those who are new.

For specific examples of how settlement and cultural communities can collaborate with sports organizations, check out these highlight videos from the Newcomer Fanship Project—Winnipeg Newcomer Sport Academy (WNSA) & Ismaili Youth Soccer Academy (IYSA) <https://youtu.be/7kdVZuak-WQ?si=gvEYJsHGvhmloYs8;>



and Action for Healthy Communities' Collective Action Forum, titled "Sports for Inclusion, Connection and Learning": [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnBIF84Ktm4&ab\\_channel=A4HCYouth](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnBIF84Ktm4&ab_channel=A4HCYouth).





## TAKE ACTION

Please use this Checklist to review your organization's approach to welcoming those who are new to Canada.



### Checklist for Inclusion

Think about your organization. Read each statement then identify the option you believe is most accurate (yes, no, unsure).	Yes	No	Unsure
<b>1.</b> We have had meetings and positive conversations about how to be more inclusive and how to encourage new-to-Canada participants to try our sport/physical activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2.</b> We have established a clear mandate to be more inclusive of new-to-Canada participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.</b> Our policies have been reviewed to ensure they are inclusive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.</b> We provide staff and volunteers, including coaches, with training to enhance cultural sensitivity and be more inclusive of new-to-Canada participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.</b> Our program information is available in multiple languages.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6.</b> We display Welcome signs in various languages at events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7.</b> We offer multiple ways to register for our programs (e.g., online or by mail).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>8.</b> We provide flexible payment options.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>9.</b> We partner with other sport/physical activity groups on initiatives to help new-to-Canada participants get involved in sport and physical activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>10.</b> Information about our sport is available in local schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11.</b> Information about our sport is available at public locations (e.g. library).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>12.</b> Information about our sport is available at local settlement agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>13.</b> We organize "Come Try"/"Open House" type events regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>14.</b> Our staff, coaches, volunteers, committees, etc., include new-to-Canada participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# For Sport and Physical Activity Organizations

## Increased Participation in Existing Sports

- Immigration drives population growth, which can lead to more new-to-Canada youth participation in club sports, school sports, and community programs. A quality sport approach can integrate new-to-Canada participants into both the communities in which they have settled<sup>7</sup> and the sports and activities they choose to pursue, helping them build social networks and feel more connected to their communities, leading to increased overall participation.
- If new-to-Canada participants who settle in Canada are aware of sport opportunities—and if they have positive first experiences in sport and physical activity programs themselves—they are more likely to prioritize their second-generation children taking part in sports as well.

## Growth of Emerging Sports

- New-to-Canada participants bring diverse cultural backgrounds, which often include knowledge of and experience in different sports and physical activities. This can lead to growth of and increased participation in sports that have not been traditionally popular in Canada. For instance, cricket has grown significantly in Canada due to immigration from South Asian countries.<sup>8</sup>
- As emerging sports and activities grow due to immigration, more Canadians may be introduced to them as well, leading to increased participation numbers while enriching Canada's overall sports culture.<sup>9</sup>

7 Sport for Life, 2023: <https://sportforlife.ca/portfolio-item/quality-sport-checklist-for-communities-and-clubs/>

8 DV8 Communication. 2024: <https://dv8communication.com/cricket-emerges-as-canadas-fastest-growing-sport-a-boon-for-multicultural-marketing/#:~:text=The%20rise%20of%20cricket%20in,%2C%20among%20other%20cricket%20enthusiasts>

9 DV8 Communication. 2024: <https://dv8communication.com/cricket-emerges-as-canadas-fastest-growing-sport-a-boon-for-multicultural-marketing/#:~:text=The%20rise%20of%20cricket%20in,%2C%20among%20other%20cricket%20enthusiasts>



The rise of cricket in Canada can be attributed to its immigrant population from cricket-loving countries. Canada is home to 2.5 million South Asians, including Indian (1.3 million people), Pakistani (303,260), and Sri Lankan (132,410), among other cricket enthusiasts.





## Reducing birth rate

Since the last set of projections in 2022, Canada's demographics have shifted, with accelerated population growth due to increased immigration, record-low fertility, and declining life expectancy.<sup>1</sup>

The projections suggest Canada's population could reach between 47.1 million and 87.2 million by 2073, with a medium-growth scenario placing it at 62.8 million. Population growth would primarily be driven by immigration, as natural increases (births minus deaths) will play a marginal role due to aging and low fertility.

By 2073, the population aged 85 and older is expected to triple, while the share of those aged 65 and older will rise significantly. Aging will affect all provinces, with Ontario and Quebec remaining the most populous, but regions like Newfoundland and Labrador could see population declines. Population aging will continue across the country, with older adults making up a larger share of the population in all provinces and territories.

1 Statistics Canada, 2024: [https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240624/dq240624b-eng.htm?utm\\_source=mstatcan&utm\\_medium=eml&utm\\_campaign=statcan-statcan-mstatcan](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240624/dq240624b-eng.htm?utm_source=mstatcan&utm_medium=eml&utm_campaign=statcan-statcan-mstatcan)

## Expanding Canada's Overall Athlete Talent Pool

- Athletes from different countries may introduce new training techniques and styles of play, which could elevate the overall competitive level in Canadian sports and improve individual and team performance across those sports.<sup>10</sup>
- Countries with a strong sport and physical activity culture tend to produce high-performing athletes. Immigrants from these countries could boost Canada's competitive edge in sports, and particularly in ones that are not traditionally strong in this country, through their expertise and experience. For instance, Canada's success in basketball has increased due to the diverse backgrounds of players in the country, many of whom are from immigrant families.<sup>11</sup> As well, sports like soccer, cricket, wrestling, and badminton could see a rise in performance levels as athletes from countries where these sports are more popular bring new skills, techniques, and strategies.<sup>12</sup> This benefits not just the player pool, but also potentially enhances coaching, officiating, and administration within these sports.

## Retention of Participants

- Inclusive and culturally responsive sport programs can help retain new-to-Canada participants by fostering a sense of belonging, representation, and support, which helps reduce dropout rates and strengthen community engagement. Ensuring positive early experiences is essential to retaining participants, particularly among girls and young women.<sup>13</sup> This sense of belonging helps to keep participants engaged and fosters long-term participation in sport and physical activity.

10 DV8 Communication. 2024: <https://dv8communication.com/cricket-emerges-as-canadas-fastest-growing-sport-a-boon-for-multicultural-marketing/#:~:text=The%20rise%20of%20cricket%20in,%2C%20among%20other%20cricket%20enthusiasts>

11 CBC, 2021: <https://www.cbc.ca/sports/basketball/basketball-canada-player-development-growth-1.5980933>

12 Paaij, R. (2014). Sport and Social Mobility: Crossing Boundaries

13 Canadian Women & Sport, 2020: <https://womenandsport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Canadian-Women-Sport-The-Rally-Report.pdf>

- Rising costs are a major barrier to participation in sports for many families, including for those new to Canada.<sup>14</sup> By addressing these financial challenges, community sport programs can help ensure long-term engagement and reduce the risk of dropout for new-to-Canada participants.

### **Improved physical, mental and social-emotional health**

- Sport and physical activity provides opportunities for social interaction and community engagement, helping new-to-Canada participants integrate into Canadian society. By participating in sports, those who are new can build social networks, overcome language barriers, and foster a sense of belonging, which improves mental and emotional well-being. These benefits will not only help keep participants engaged in sport, but also help them to excel.
- Increased participation in physical activity, which can be driven by culturally diverse sports practices introduced by those who are new, promotes healthier lifestyles. Regular physical activity helps reduce the risk of chronic diseases, improves mental health, and contributes to overall physical well-being. By incorporating their own cultural sports or fitness traditions, new-to-Canada participants can inspire greater community participation, enhancing the state of specific sports and physical activities while also boosting public health outcomes.



**New-to-Canada participants who feel connected to their communities are more likely to stay in their host countries.**

### **Contributing to sport and physical activity infrastructure and economic environment**

- With a growing population and a focus on diversity, government and private sector investment in sports infrastructure and high-performance training centres might increase to accommodate new sports, benefiting athletes' performance across the board. In turn, this creates jobs and generates revenue through memberships, sports events, and merchandise sales.
- Immigration can also lead to the creation of new sports programs, leagues, and facilities to accommodate a more diverse population, generating economic activity and jobs in the fitness, recreation, and sports sectors. This, in turn, increases access to sport and fitness programs, improving the overall quality of life for all residents, including new-to-Canada participants.

New-to-Canada participants who feel connected to their communities are more likely to stay in their host countries. Sports programs that prioritize inclusion, health, and community-building have been recognized globally as effective tools for social inclusion. Canada can create an environment where those who are new feel valued, supported, and more likely to build their futures in the country.

<sup>14</sup> Canadian Tire Jumpstart, 2023: <https://jumpstart.canadiantire.ca/blogs/news/2023-state-of-sport-report-shows-rising-costs-threatening-access-to-sport>

# Section Two

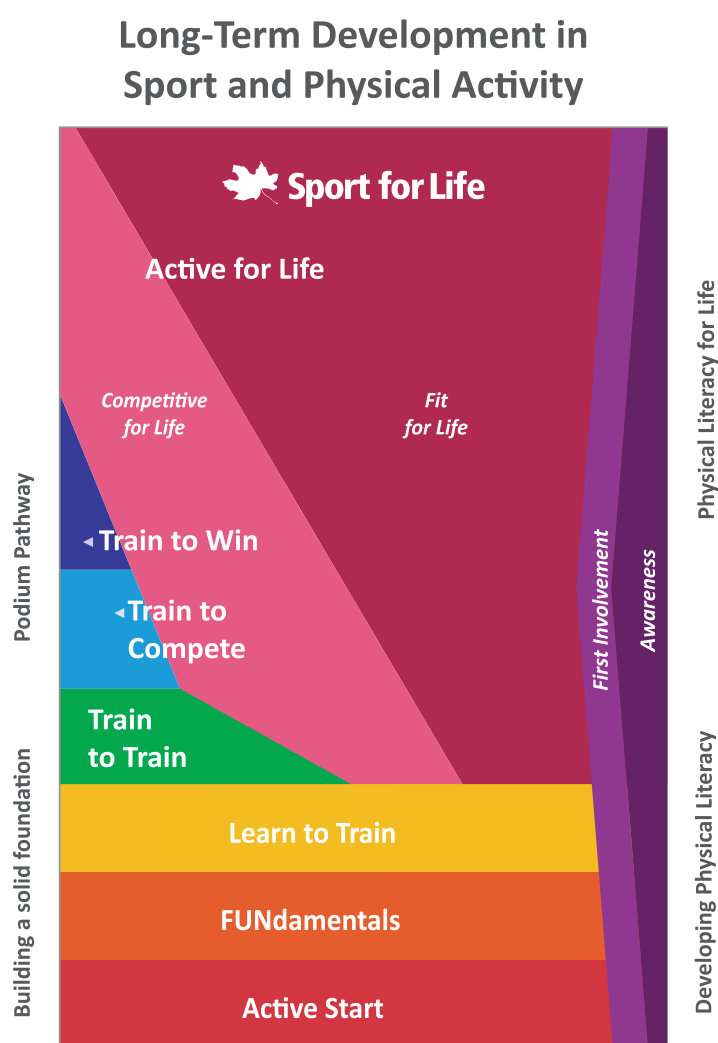
## Pathways through New-to-Canada Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity





# The Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Framework

The *Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Framework* (LTD), upon which the *New-to-Canada Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Pathway* (NLTD) is built, establishes an inclusive, stage-based, developmentally appropriate pathway for everyone. This pathway encompasses participation, training, competition and recovery, and while everyone's journey is unique, LTD guides an individual's experience in sport and physical activity from infancy through all phases of adulthood.<sup>1</sup>



**LTD** aims to link the sport, education, recreation, health and government sectors to effectively align community, provincial and national programming. **NLTD** shares these broad goals but with two primary focus areas:

- **linking** newcomer-support agencies, associations, centres and organizations with those organizations and institutes from across the sport, recreation and education sectors that deliver sport and physical activity; and
- **aligning** messaging, awareness and communication methods, support strategies, and programming between all entities and sectors that support newcomers in their settlement and integration process, and their connection to and journeys through sport and physical activity.

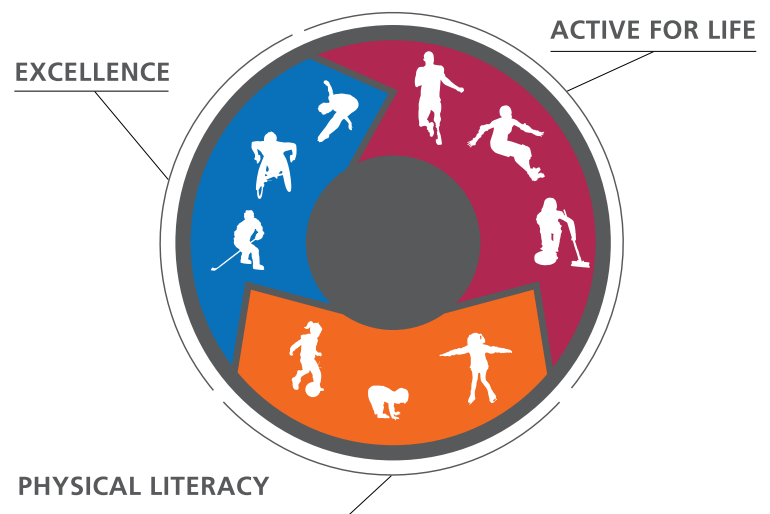
<sup>1</sup> Sport for Life (2019). Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity 3.0: <https://sportforlife.ca/portfolio-item/long-term-development-in-sport-and-physical-activity-3-0/>

**FIGURE 1:** *Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Framework*

Awareness and First Involvement are integral components of everyone's initial experiences in sport and physical activity. Physical literacy, while vital during the early stages, is not confined to the early stages—it can and should continue to be developed throughout the life course. The Podium Pathway describes the sport-defined excellence stages of Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity and specifically applies to athletes on a trajectory toward podium results at the highest level of their sport. And finally, the ultimate goal, that everyone ends up Active for Life.



The three key outcomes of LTD are individuals developing physical literacy, striving for excellence in their chosen sports and physical activities, and being active for life. LTD takes a holistic, participant-centred approach, focusing on the social, mental and physical development of each individual, as well as their sport- and activity-specific technical and tactical development. A critical aspect is the emphasis on quality when it comes to sport and physical activity experiences—good people, good programs, good places.



**FIGURE 2:** *The three outcomes of Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity*  
Participants developing a broad and strong foundation of physical literacy to be able to pursue excellence in whatever sports and physical activities they choose, and having the motivation to be active for life.

New-to-Canada participants come with varying degrees of physical literacy (the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life ) as well as a wide range of social, mental, physical, and technical-tactical capabilities (specific types of knowledge, skills, attributes and attitudes). Like all Canadians, new-to-Canada participants require an individualized approach to enhance their own level of physical literacy, while broadening and developing their capabilities, through quality, developmentally appropriate experiences. The concept of continuous improvement is the underlying spirit of LTD.

# Awareness & First Involvement

Each stage of LTD becomes important at the developmentally appropriate time within an individual's journey through their pathway. However, when it comes to new-to-Canada participants, the LTD pre-stages of Awareness and First Involvement are particularly important. They set the foundation for meaningful and sustained engagement in sport and physical activity. Involvement at the Awareness and First Involvement pre-stages introduce those who are new to local networks, helping them build relationships and integrate into Canadian society.

While Awareness and First Involvement are components of an individual's personal participation pathway, and will be reflected in this resource largely in the perspective of a new-to-Canada participant, it's important to keep in mind that these considerations are also very relevant for both those who support new-to-Canada participants, and sport and physical activity organizations.

**When it comes to those who support new-to-Canada participants**, their goals are to see the folks they work with comfortably settled, feeling welcome and included in their new communities, and thriving in their daily activities. Sport and physical activity can be such effective ways for new-to-Canada participants to start to feel comfortable in a new country and connected to their new environments, and so the more these supporters can do to help new-to-Canada participants learn about what sport and physical activity opportunities exist, and how to access them, then the more likely it is they'll see their goals realized.

**When it comes to sport and physical activity leaders**, in particular coaches, programmers and those on the front lines, a lot of the time they won't know much about the background of a new participant in their program. They won't necessarily know where a new-to-Canada participant has come from, what they have gone through to be in Canada, and there in that program, or what their reality and potential challenges might look like. But if a coach or programmer has some awareness of what this new-to-Canada participant's background or experience might include, then they would also understand how important a positive first involvement could be for this participant—and therefore how critical their role is in ensuring that happens for this participant to help them feel welcome, included and safe in their new environment.

The recommendations in the following two sections are largely geared toward sport and physical activity organizations; however, for these recommendations to be as effective as possible, those who support new-to-Canada participants can play an active role in either promoting the recommendations or being directly involved in their rollout.



## Awareness

Awareness cultivates an understanding of the range of opportunities that exist for sport and physical activity, and how to get involved. To this end, both new-to-Canada participant-support and sport and physical activity organizations need to develop awareness and communication plans to make offerings and resources known.

If new-to-Canada participants don't know about the range of programs available and/or where they are or how to access them, they are less likely to participate. Mainstream sport and physical activity organizations can bridge this knowledge gap through awareness initiatives that promote programs, facilities, and events that will be aware of and support the needs of new-to-Canada participants.

### Recommendations:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Use multilingual campaigns to ensure that information about programs is accessible to new-to-Canada participants from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Highlight culturally inclusive imagery and messaging in promotional materials to reflect the diversity of the community and create a welcoming tone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Offer orientation sessions or informational webinars on how to navigate the local sport system, register for programs, and access resources. Provide new-to-Canada participants with contact points (e.g., hotline or email) where they can ask questions or request additional support.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Partner with settlement agencies, schools, and cultural associations to share information about opportunities directly with new-to-Canada participants. Recruit and empower community ambassadors from new-to-Canada participant groups to act as liaisons/champions and promote sports programs within their networks, while also coaching the hosts of these programs on how to make the sessions welcoming for the people attending.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Organize “try-it” days where new-to-Canada participants can learn about and participate in various sports. Include demonstrations and testimonials from new-to-Canada participants who have successfully integrated through sport, showcasing the program's benefits. Ensure that next steps are clear and barrier free for new-to-Canada participants who participate—don't assume they will know how to register or even get to the program. If possible, provide transportation, or at least clear transportation directions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Provide free or low-cost introductory sessions, open houses, or trial programs for new-to-Canada participants to explore different sports without a financial commitment. Clearly communicate information on program fees, equipment requirements, and support available (e.g., loaner equipment or subsidies).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Where possible, host programs and events in places where new-to-Canada participants may already be familiar, or make them a part of something new-to-Canada participants are already doing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Distribute brochures and flyers in newcomer hubs, such as settlement centres, libraries, places of worship, and community centres. Provide information to immigration consultants or lawyers to share with their clients during the settlement process.</li> </ul>	

## First Involvement

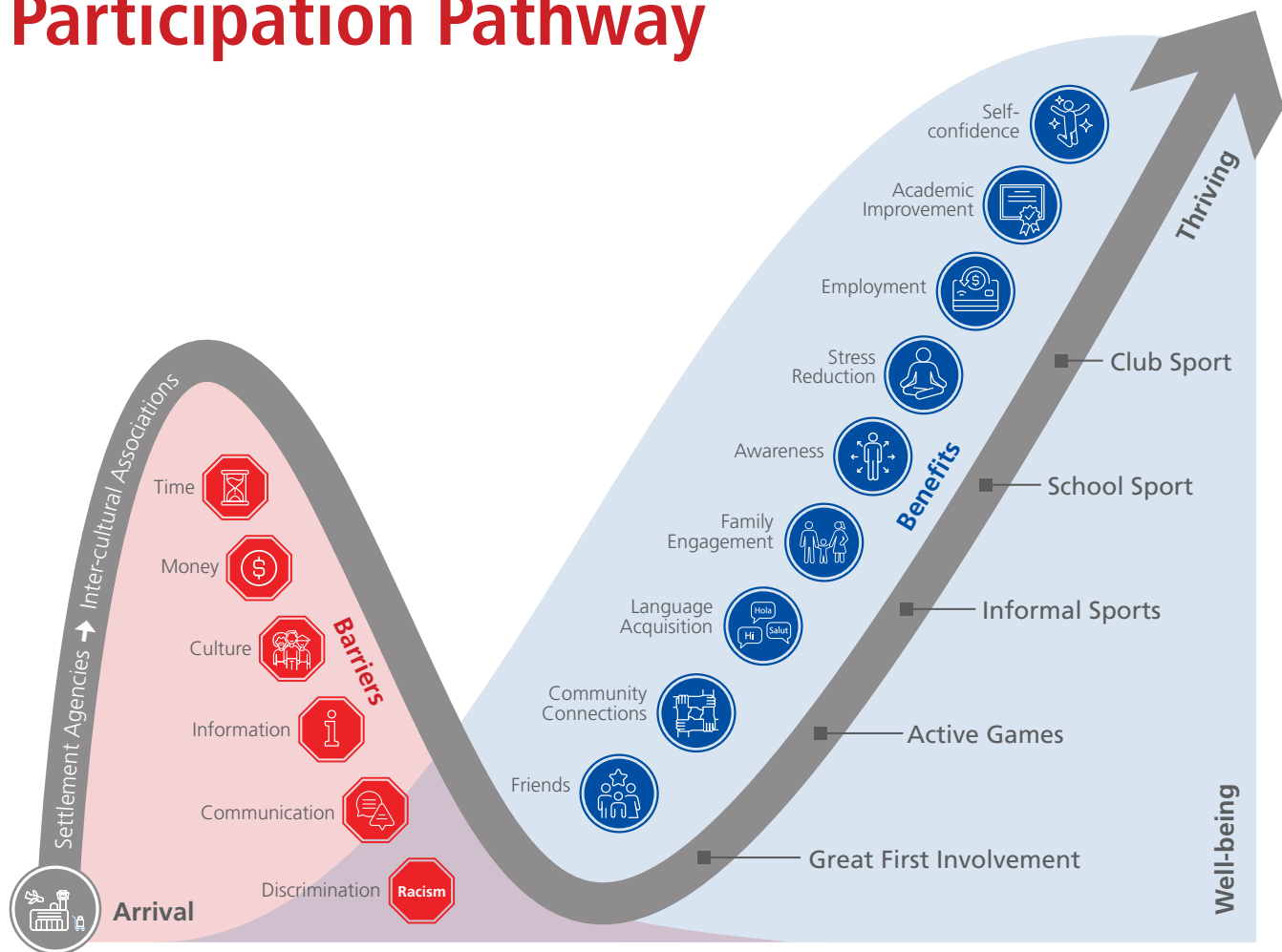
First Involvement ensures that individuals who are trying an activity for the first time have a positive first experience and want to stay engaged. Organizations need to train coaches and develop programs to provide a suitable orientation for individuals, helping them feel confident and comfortable in their surroundings and welcome among their peers and activity leaders. Physical literacy development is important to help individuals develop their movement skills, grow in confidence, and develop and sustain the desire to continue their participation.

When the first involvement is positive, welcoming, and reassuring, it inspires people to keep going. That's why it's essential for individuals discovering a sport or physical activity for the first time to feel welcome, safe, and supported. On the other hand, an environment marked by discrimination, a lack of support, or limited openness can discourage them from continuing. Offering a warm and supportive first experience helps foster comfort, confidence, and the desire to come back—especially for those who may feel excluded due to cultural, physical, or social differences. That's why it's crucial to have a clear plan to welcome, include, and support participants right from the start.

### Recommendations:

<input type="checkbox"/> Train staff, coaches, and volunteers in cultural competency to understand and respect diverse traditions, values, and practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Minimize leader talking and focus on getting the participants engaged early and often.
<input type="checkbox"/> Use facilities and programs that foster an environment of psychological and physical safety where new-to-Canada participants feel respected and valued.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider opportunities for entire families to participate together, such as parent-child classes or community tournaments.
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruit diverse staff and volunteers who reflect the communities being served to create a sense of belonging.	<input type="checkbox"/> Include interpreters or have program leaders who can interpret for participants to ensure language is not a barrier.
<input type="checkbox"/> Design programs that accommodate all skill levels, ensuring no one feels left out or overwhelmed.	

# New-to-Canada Participation Pathway



**FIGURE 3: New-to-Canada Participation Pathway**  
 When newcomers arrive in Canada, their first points of engagement often are with settlement agencies and supporting groups such as intercultural associations. Despite available support from various organizations and associations, newcomers face many **barriers** as they begin their lives in Canada. Participating in sport and physical activity can play a big role in helping new-to-Canada participants overcome these barriers, and once they are aware of and have a great first involvement as they embark on their participation pathway, they will experience many **benefits** to enhance their lives. To learn more, check out the [New to Canada Long-Term Development \(NLTD\) – Creating Inclusive Pathways in Sport](https://youtu.be/iCsSt9rm2eA?si=a9WNlba2FF0oRjZS) video: <https://youtu.be/iCsSt9rm2eA?si=a9WNlba2FF0oRjZS>.

Arrival in Canada can occur under a range of circumstances. People come in search of work, economic or educational opportunities; to join family; or to escape conflict, persecution, or large-scale human rights violations. Regardless of their background, many face challenges integrating into Canadian society. Sport and physical activity can help newcomers to settle and thrive by offering them opportunities to connect, engage, and grow within their new environment.



## Benefits of Sport and Physical Activity for New-to-Canada Participants

Sport and physical activity can be a tool to help overcome these barriers. They also provide numerous social, mental and physical benefits for new-to-Canada participants and their families.



### **Social Integration—Friends and Community Connections:**<sup>2</sup>

Engaging in sports and physical activity provides new-to-Canada participants the opportunity to build friendships and social networks, fostering a sense of community and belonging while enhancing overall well-being. Families engaged in sports and physical activities together further build their collective network while becoming integrated members of their communities and country as a whole. Sport and physical activity serve as a common language that can remove cultural barriers and enhance cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.



**Language Acquisition:**<sup>3</sup> Through participation in sports and physical activities—especially team sports and community-engaged activities—new-to-Canada participants have immersive opportunities to practice and improve their language skills. Interacting with teammates, coaches, and peers leads to natural language acquisition, and often in a fun and engaging environment.



**Family Engagement:** Programs for families help new-to-Canada participants establish shared experiences and networks, while also strengthening their own family bonds. Another benefit of engaging as a family is the opportunity to establish active, healthy lifestyle habits that can prevent chronic diseases and

2 Smart, S. (2019). The Capacity of Sport to Integrate Newcomers into Canadian Communities. University of Guelph: <https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/d05c504b-2d03-4ddb-8bf5-74cd93064478/content>

3 Doherty and Taylor (2007). Sport and physical recreation in the settlement of immigrant youth: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241734668\\_Sport\\_and\\_physical\\_recreation\\_in\\_the\\_settlement\\_of\\_immigrant\\_youth](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241734668_Sport_and_physical_recreation_in_the_settlement_of_immigrant_youth)



endure across generations. Families participating in sport together also contribute to a sense of connectedness within the community.



**Awareness:**<sup>4</sup> Cultivates an understanding of the range of opportunities that exist for sport and physical activity, and how to get involved. Increased awareness will help ensure participants feel confident they have the information they need, and this will also enhance their feelings of connection.



**Stress Reduction:**<sup>5</sup> Participation in sports and physical activities is a great way to manage and reduce stress, especially for those coping with resettlement challenges. Physical activity releases endorphins, promoting relaxation and a sense of calmness, contributing to improved mental health.



**Employment:**<sup>6</sup> In addition to personal development, participation in sports can build employability skills such as teamwork, leadership, and communication. As well, volunteering

in some capacity or taking part as coaches, referees, or support staff can potentially lead to work. New-to-Canada participants involved in sport can meet people and build networks that might lead to employment.



**Academic Improvement:**<sup>7</sup> Research shows that physical activity supports brain function and enhances academic success.<sup>8</sup> Regular physical activity can also improve focus, discipline and time management skills. Often, when parents value and prioritize their children's involvement in sport and physical activity, they tend to prioritize academic success as well.



**Self-confidence:**<sup>9</sup> By developing skills, achieving goals and making social connections through sport and physical activity, new-to-Canada participants will develop self-confidence, self-esteem and belief in their abilities. Experiencing success in these activities can lead to increased sense of empowerment, resilience, and optimism, positively impacting all aspects of life.

While it's important that those working with newcomers to help them settle know that involvement in sport and physical has many benefits and can be a tool to overcome barriers, it's also important for sport and physical activity organizations to reflect on where the barriers exist in their programs and environments, and where they can be more aware of and focused on new-to-Canada inclusion. While barriers exist, so too do solutions.

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- 4 Barrick, S., Bridel, W., & Bard Miller, J. (2021). Striving for newcomer inclusion: a critical analysis of Canadian Intro to Sport programmes. *Leisure/Loisir*, 45(1), 1–34: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2021.1872406>
- 5 O'Reilly, M., & Peters, K. (2014). Perspectives on physical activity among immigrants and refugees to Canada. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*: [https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3961572/?utm\\_source](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3961572/?utm_source)
- 6 Extejt, M. M., & Smith, J. E. (2009). Leadership Development through Sports Team Participation. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 8(2), 224–237: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274299281\\_Leadership\\_Development\\_through\\_Sports\\_Team\\_Participation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274299281_Leadership_Development_through_Sports_Team_Participation)
- 7 Donnelly, J. E., et al. (2016). Physical Activity, Fitness, and Physical Education: Effects on Academic Performance. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK201501/?utm\\_source](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK201501/?utm_source)
- 8 Newcomer Research Library, 2024: <https://newcomerresearch.ca/2024/01/01/empowering-new-beginnings-a-holistic-evaluation-of-a-community-developed-multi-sports-program-for-New-to-Canada-refugee-youths-and-its-impact-on-physical-literacy-mental-wellbeing-and-social-health>
- 9 Kaya, A., Faulkner, P. E., Martinek, T., Rotich, J. P., & Baber, C. R. (2022). Immigrant Youth Leadership Identity Development Through Sport Participation in a New Country. *European Journal of Physical Education and Sport Science*: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361716950\\_immigrant\\_youth\\_leadership\\_identity\\_development\\_through\\_sport\\_participation\\_in\\_a\\_new\\_country](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361716950_immigrant_youth_leadership_identity_development_through_sport_participation_in_a_new_country)

# Barriers and Solutions to a Welcoming, Inclusive Experience

The following lays out the **barriers** and then provides guidance on relevant **solutions**. The six primary bullets are directly related to the *Sport for Life for Every New-to-Canada Participant* resource: [sportforlife.ca/portfolio-item/New-to-Canada-participants](https://sportforlife.ca/portfolio-item/new-to-canada-participants).

The information in this section is largely geared toward sport and physical activity organizations; however, for these solutions to be as effective as possible, those who support new-to-Canada participants can help by being aware of, promoting, or actively engaging with the solutions.

## Time

### Barriers

- Sports may demand too much time for many working families to manage, especially those who are adapting to life in a new country. While this barrier is both perceived and actual, lack of time is cited as a major barrier for both new and established Canadians.
- New-to-Canada participants may see education, work, and learning the language and culture as a priority over physical activity and sports, and therefore not formally engage in them.

### Solutions

- Provide opportunities that are flexible for families regarding time. Activities offered through a child's school might be easier for some families to manage. Offer drop-in programs at various times/days so that participants can attend when it is convenient for them.
- Explain the benefits of making sport and physical activity a priority. Provide workshops or community information sessions where administrators and coaches can promote the sport and answer questions about the program, including the time commitment involved.

New-to-Canada participants often encounter barriers such as:



Not enough **time**



**Money** – financial constraints



**Culture** differences



Lack of **information** on how to participate



**Communication**— language barriers and complex registration systems or instructions in unfamiliar languages



**Discrimination** which often comes in the form of racism and exclusion





## Money

### Barriers

- Some newcomers may arrive with very few financial resources. In the first few years they may be focused on other priorities such as finding a job and house, and settling children into school. Sports and activities can present financial barriers especially if they involve expensive equipment, registration, and facility fees.
- Many families cannot afford a car or have to be at work when games, practices, or programs occur. Depending on the age of the child, the schedule of the games and practices or the cost of use of the public transportation system may not be an option. In addition, families may not feel comfortable asking for help or carpooling with other families on the team.

### Solutions

- Offer free and or programs at different price points when possible. “Try before you buy”—offer a membership after a free trial period. This lets participants try the program before they fully invest. KidSport and Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities provide grants to eligible participants demonstrating financial need.
- Offer after-school programs at schools where youth are already. Collaborate with local agencies and organizations to use their buses to move children to and from programs. Inquire if local transportation systems have policies that remove barriers for new-to-Canada participants.



## Culture

### Barriers

- Due to organizational policies and procedures, there may be differences in the ways in which sports are organized throughout Canada—not just by province, but even by municipality. New-to-Canada participants may not know how to navigate what's required, including registration process, fees and structures, and information about these things may not be complete, easily accessible, or presented in terminology someone new to Canadian culture can understand.
- Political and cultural clashes from counties of origin, or between countries of origin, may follow new-to-Canada participants in Canada. This can determine who they are willing to play with and against.

### Solutions

- Ensure information about your organization/program is easily accessible and available in different formats. Marketing materials are clear and concise.
- Facilitate play and participation on teams or be involved in programs with others from their country of origin as a feeder to then joining mainstream leagues due to comfort levels and familiarity.



## Information

### Barriers

- In general, there is a lack of information on how to get involved in certain sports and activities, as well as the assistance programs that exist to support involvement.
- Many new-to-Canada participants are unfamiliar with Canadian sports and activities, therefore making it difficult to engage without some basic introduction. Once the basic rules and skills are learned, confidence and the desire to continue in the sport or activity may be developed.

### Solutions

- Promote your program widely and connect with places where new-to-Canada participants go, such as settlement centres, religious buildings, and community events.
- Partner with new-to-Canada participant-supporting organizations and other grassroots organizations to develop and share information and sit on local committees to ensure that their voices are heard and included.

## Communication

### Barriers

- Language barriers may prevent some parents or caregivers from registering their children in sports and activities. It may also cause difficulty with finding information, dealing with paperwork and registration, and communicating with leaders once they are engaged in the program.
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### Solutions

- Materials in languages other than English and French—Canada’s two official languages—that reflects the demographics of the community. Look to local settlement agencies for top languages spoken in your area and also they can direct you to translators and interpreters.
- Offer different methods of communicating with participants about scheduling, game changes, program updates, etc. Work one-on-one with the participants to identify a communication method that works best for them such as email or phone.
- Materials in languages other than English and French—Canada’s two official languages—that reflects the demographics of the community. Look to local settlement agencies for top languages spoken in your area and also they can direct you to translators and interpreters.
- Offer different methods of communicating with participants about scheduling, game changes, program updates, etc. Work one-on-one with the participants to identify a communication method that works best for them such as email or phone.





## Discrimination

### Barriers

- Systemic racism occurs through exclusion, cultural bias, and a lack of representation. This often manifests in the form of unequal access to opportunities (e.g., tryouts, coaching, funding), Discriminatory attitudes (both overt and subtle) from coaches, parents, or teammates; stereotyping that affects how players are perceived and treated (e.g., assuming new-to-Canada participants lack skill or commitment).
- Racism often occurs in sport particularly in those with few other new-to-Canada participants. Sport and physical activity organizations in a multicultural society like Canada, may need to be more proactive in recruiting talent that is diverse. Sport organizations should be aware of this and work to increase their marketing and recruiting talent so that unintentional segregation does not occur (sometimes segregation and exclusion are important to create spaces for equity-deserving participants to feel part of a group).

### Solutions

- Have a zero tolerance policy for racism. Make this policy known in documents and publicity, and integrate it into the code of conduct for leaders, coaches, athletes, and parents. An example is the Anti-Racism in Sport Accord. Mentorship Networks that connect new-to-Canada athletes with role models who have successfully navigated the system.
- Make mandatory and/or encourage coaches, leaders, and parents to take courses such as Respect in Sport, which helps people recognize, understand, and respond to issues of bullying, abuse, harassment, and discrimination.
- Use the free [Play Fair Toolkit](https://inclusionincanadiansports.ca/icsnplayfairtoolkit/) (<https://inclusionincanadiansports.ca/icsnplayfairtoolkit/>) resource designed to address and combat racism and discrimination within the sports community.

By addressing these barriers and implementing inclusive practices, we can create a more welcoming and supportive environment that enables new-to-Canada participants to access and benefit from sports and physical activity opportunities across the country.

# Navigating the New-to-Canada Participation Pathway

Each individual has their own personal pathway through the LTD framework. Participant development is not linear, and new-to-Canada participants will arrive at varying ages and developmental stages, with different levels of experience and skill sets, and with their own unique background. It is imperative that new-to-Canada participants are first aware of the quality sport and physical activity opportunities available to them, and second, have a positive first involvement when they join these programs so that they want to come back.<sup>10</sup> It is therefore critical that sport and physical activity leaders and programmers recognize and welcome the diversity that new-to-Canada participants bring, while also making every effort to meet their specific needs.

There are a variety of ways new-to-Canada participants can access sport and recreation in Canada. However it is that new-to-Canada participants seek out and access opportunities, it is important for those supporting and guiding them to be aware of the most accessible and inclusive opportunities, to consider online resources and apps as access points, and to also be aware of what volunteer opportunities may be available.

## Through those who support new-to-Canada participants:

### 1. Settlement Agencies and Support Services:

- Settlement agencies and support services can provide simple, active games that use easy-to-find, inexpensive equipment, and focus on language acquisition and fun.
- They should consider collaborating with local sport and physical activity organizations to share information about and provide sports and recreational opportunities tailored to the needs of new-to-Canada participants.

### **Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:**

Inquire about available sports programs and support services through settlement agencies and community support organizations.

### 2. Ethnic and Cultural Associations:

- Ethnic and cultural associations can also offer simple, active games that use easy-to-find, inexpensive equipment, and focus on language acquisition and social interaction among members.
- They can and often do organize sports and recreational activities tailored to the interests and preferences of specific communities.

### **Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:**

Connect with ethnic and cultural associations in their area to inquire about sports programs and events.

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<sup>10</sup> Barrick, S., Bridel, W., & Bard Miller, J. (2021). Striving for newcomer inclusion: a critical analysis of Canadian Intro to Sport programmes. *Leisure/Loisir*, 45(1), 1–34: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2021.1872406>



## Through organizations and institutions that offer sport and physical activity:

### 1. Municipal Recreation Programs:

- Most municipalities in Canada provide recreational programs and facilities, including sports leagues, fitness classes, community centres, swimming pools, and parks.

#### ***Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:***

Contact their local municipal government or visit its website to explore available programs and facilities.

### 2. Nonprofit and Charitable Organizations:

- Several nonprofit and charitable organizations in Canada focus on providing sports and recreational opportunities to underserved populations, including immigrants and refugees.

#### ***Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:***

Seek out organizations such as YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, or local nonprofits dedicated to promoting sports and physical activity.

### 3. School and Educational Institutions:

- Schools and educational institutions in Canada offer a wide range of sports programs and extracurricular activities for students of all ages.

#### ***Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:***

Find out what your school, or your family member's school offers, and ask about participating in school sports teams, intramural leagues, and after-school programs.

### 4. Community Sports Clubs and Organizations:

- Many communities in Canada have local sports clubs and organizations offering a variety of organized sport and recreational activities, such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, and swimming.

#### ***Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:***

Inquire about available sports clubs through community centres, local schools, or online resources

### 5. Sports Events and Festivals:

- Canadian communities host a variety of sports events, festivals, and tournaments throughout the year, showcasing a diverse range of sports and recreational activities.

#### ***Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:***

Inquire about attending these events as spectators or participating as volunteers, experiencing the excitement of sports and connecting with the broader sports community.

# The New-to-Canada Participation Pathway through the Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Framework



**FIGURE 4:** The new-to-Canada participation pathway through the Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Framework

New-to-Canada participants who arrive and enter the sport and physical activity system can follow a pathway through LTD, beginning with Active Start or FUNdamentals. Adults who are new to Canada may begin their journey in Active for Life. Either way, the key is a great first involvement. Whether a young child or an older adult, individuals can always develop skills and enjoy quality sport.



# Seven Guiding Principles of Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity

The Seven Guiding Principles of Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity align closely with Sport for Life's primary goals of supporting physical literacy development, ensuring pathways toward sport excellence, and empowering everyone to be active for life. They strive to clearly and effectively guide individuals, organizations and communities in their application of Long-Term Development. They do this by taking a sustainable, lifelong approach rather than a short-term, reactive one.

When considering these guiding principles within a new-to-Canada context, it is important to tailor them accordingly. New-to-Canada participants will enter the sport and physical activity system at different ages, developmental stages and entry points. They will bring with them diverse cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. Welcoming them, including them, and ensuring they feel belonging will require thoughtfulness, adaptability, and genuine care. Effective application of these guiding principles will ensure these participants are supported and guided through their Long-Term Development journeys, maximizing benefits and minimizing barriers, while providing as wide a range of opportunities as possible.





## 1. Collaborative and Aligned

A quality sport and physical activity ecosystem that optimizes participant development pathways, as well as opportunities for physical literacy development, requires collaboration and alignment. Participants take part in sport and physical activity programs offered by a range of organizations at various levels—recreation providers, school programs, and the club, as well as provincial and national levels of sport. While it can be challenging to do so, participants benefit greatly when program alignment occurs within a single sport, across sports, and across sectors.

This requires synergy and a shared vision among invested partners. Key components include knowledge exchange, strategic resource allocation, data-driven decision-making, inclusivity, and adaptive leadership. Working toward and upholding this goal ensures a cohesive and harmonious approach to participant development.

### ***For those who support new-to-Canada participants:***

What might collaboration look like across your networks, and how could you connect with local sport or recreation providers to help new-to-Canada participants navigate available opportunities? Consider how collaborating and aligning with organizations such as schools, clubs, and community programs could help reduce barriers and create a more welcoming, consistent experience. Greater alignment across sectors and programs may also make it easier for newcomers to settle and integrate into their communities through sport and physical activity. When participants feel supported by a connected network, they are more likely to build lasting relationships and stay engaged over time.

### ***For sport and physical activity organizations in Canada:***

How might alignment across municipal, provincial/territorial, and national levels improve the consistency and accessibility of development pathways for new-to-Canada participants, and reduce duplication or gaps in programming? Consider opportunities to work across

## Many Journeys<sup>1</sup>

These examples highlight first- and second-generation Canadians who have made an incredible impact through sport. As someone who supports newcomers in their settlement process in Canada, or as someone who works for a sport or physical activity organization that has the opportunity to welcome new-to-Canada participants into your programming, think about the important role you play in helping ensure new-to-Canada participants have access to and positive experiences within sport—and in helping them achieve their potential in life.

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<sup>1</sup> Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2024: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/immigration-matters/growing-canada-future/sports.html>



**Farkhunda  
Muhtaj**

Farkhunda Muhtaj, originally from Afghanistan, emigrated to Canada with her family at age two. In her youth, she found her community and resilience through soccer. She went on to play for York University as well as captain of the Afghanistan women's national team. When the Taliban took over in 2021, Muhtaj helped evacuate the Afghan youth female national team players whose lives were at risk. After successfully relocating them to Portugal, she spent four months helping them settle, providing education and support. In addition to her humanitarian work, Muhtaj co-founded the Scarborough Simbas in 2020, offering free recreational and wellness programs for newcomers and at-risk youth in Canada. She achieved her personal dream of playing professionally by signing with Fortuna Sittard in the Netherlands in 2022 and was recognized as a Game Changer by Volkswagen FC for her impactful community work. Muhtaj encourages others to highlight local leaders, believing that recognition inspires positive change.

sports to share best practices and learnings, as well as with sectors like education or recreation to foster a shared understanding and collective impact. What could strategic knowledge sharing, coordinated planning, and reducing barriers to access mean for growing participation and strengthening your sport's development environment through new-to-Canada inclusion? A more unified approach may also help ensure that participants experience smoother transitions and sustained engagement at every stage of their development.

## **2. Evidence-informed Continuous Improvement**

The desire for continuous improvement guides Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity. Long-Term Development frameworks and programs respond to and evolve based on changes in sport and physical activity structures. They are based on the best available sport science and practical coaching experiences. Frameworks and programs that undergo necessary updates and improvements are evidence-informed but not necessarily evidence-based. This principle emphasizes small adjustments, incremental progress, continuous monitoring, data analysis, and innovation, all based on empirical evidence.

### ***For those who support new-to-Canada participants:***

How might you use feedback and data collected from new-to-Canada participants to continuously improve the experiences and support you provide? Consider how small adjustments based on feedback, community input, or participant experiences can help ensure that new-to-Canada participants feel valued, heard, and well-supported. Regularly evaluating the needs and challenges faced by these participants might reveal opportunities to refine integration strategies, making their transition smoother and fostering long-term engagement in sport and physical activity.

### ***For sport and physical activity organizations in Canada:***

What does continuous improvement look like within your organization, and how might it guide the evolution of your programs over time? Consider how ongoing data analysis, feedback from new-to-Canada participants, and the integration of new research can inform decision-making and program updates. Incremental adjustments, driven by evidence and evolving needs, can create more effective and inclusive programs that better serve diverse populations, ultimately strengthening the development environment for your sport. How might fostering a culture of continuous improvement support innovation and better long-term outcomes when it comes to reaching, supporting and including new-to-Canada participants?

### **3. Developmentally Appropriate**

Sport for Life's Long-Term Development framework prioritizes "Optimal programs driven by developmentally appropriate activities." This principle highlights the need to customize training, competition, and recovery plans to individuals' unique physical, intellectual, social, cultural and moral stages of development. It aims for holistic growth and recognizes diverse development paths. It ensures welcoming, safe, and meaningful competition, alignment with participants' developmental and chronological ages, sensitivity to growth periods, and individual motivations—all of which contribute to effective program design.

### ***For those who support new-to-Canada participants:***

How might you ensure that the programs you support are developmentally appropriate for new-to-Canada participants, taking into account their unique physical, mental, cultural, and socio-emotional backgrounds? Consider how cultural sensitivity and awareness of different life experiences can inform the approach taken by sport and physical activity organizations. By learning about the available programs that recognize and respect these differences, you can help new-to-Canada participants find and access programs that are best suited to their needs and stage of development.



**Dacious  
Richardson**

Dash Richardson, a Liberia-born athlete and refugee, experienced a stark cultural shift upon his arrival to Canada, particularly noting the empty soccer fields, which contrasted with the always-busy play spaces of his home country. After nearly a decade in Canada, he has taken significant steps to fill those fields through his work as co-leader of the Surrey Newcomer Council and organizer of the Surrey Youth Mini Soccer Tournament, which promotes inclusion for Indigenous players, refugees, and at-risk youth.

Richardson's passion for soccer helped him cope with feelings of grief and loneliness as he adjusted to his new environment. He has become an influential figure in his community, coaching various sports, mentoring youth, and facilitating programs that provide free sports opportunities. His dedication earned him nominations for awards like the BC Multiculturalism Award. Now working as a safe school liaison with the Surrey School District, he engages with marginalized students and aims to be a positive influence and mentor. He believes in the power of sports to provide guidance and support for young people, encouraging them to see role models in their lives and fostering a sense of community and belonging. Richardson's efforts demonstrate a commitment to uplifting youth through sport, creating pathways for positive change and personal growth.



**Marco  
Arop**

Representing Canada, Marco Arop was crowned the world 800m champion in 2023, as well as the Olympic silver medallist in 2024. He credits his success to his parents, particularly his mother, who faced immense challenges in raising six children after fleeing civil war in Sudan. Arop speaks with deep admiration for his parents' sacrifices, their work ethic, and the love they showed, which has inspired him throughout his life and athletic career. When his mother, Aluel, immigrated to Canada, she faced many challenges. She didn't speak English at the time and had to adjust to a new life. Despite the difficulties, she often expresses her gratitude for the support her family received in Canada.

Arop, also named Team Canada captain, embraces his role in helping others and is determined to share his experiences with the next generation of athletes. He believes in the importance of finding the right support team, working hard, and staying patient. Reflecting on his journey, Arop emphasizes that success is about focusing on small, consistent efforts and trusting the process.

### ***For Sport and Physical Activity Organizations in Canada:***

How can your programs and training be adjusted to suit the diverse developmental stages of your participants, considering their unique physical, mental, cultural and socio-emotional needs? Consider how developmentally appropriate practices can lead to more effective capability development and foster a positive, engaging experience for participants. Aligning competition and training with participants' stages of development and individual motivations can help create an environment where all athletes can thrive and feel supported, while also ensuring that programs are safe, inclusive, and accessible for a wide range of participants. What role might customization of development plans play in improving long-term outcomes and retention in your sport? Additionally, meeting participants where they're at is crucial; some new-to-Canada participants may be unfamiliar with the sport or activity, while others may already be proficient. How might you adapt your approach to accommodate both situations and ensure that every participant feels welcomed and challenged appropriately?



#### 4. Physical Literacy to Multisport to Specialization

Developing physical literacy and avoiding early over-specialization is essential to the pursuit of increased physical competence, personal excellence, and lifelong engagement in sport and physical activity. This principle emphasizes an initial focus on physical literacy development, followed by multisport participation to develop the fundamental movement skills and foundational sport skills that build athleticism, competence, confidence and motivation, while reducing burnout risk. Increased sport, event or position specialization occurs at different stages of development in different sports, ideally after an individual has participated in multiple sports, but must align with a given sport's LTD pathway. Focusing on physical literacy and gradual, personalized specialization remains key to unlocking an individual's athletic potential.

##### ***For those who support new-to-Canada participants:***

How might the programs you're aware of and support help new-to-Canada participants develop physical literacy, while also encouraging participation in multiple sports and physical activities to foster a broad skill set? Consider how encouraging new participants to experience a range of sports can not only build fundamental movement skills but also promote confidence and enjoyment in physical activity. Recognize that some new-to-Canada participants may be familiar with one sport, while others may need exposure to a variety of activities. What could the integration of physical literacy and multisport opportunities mean for building long-term engagement and supporting new-to-Canada participants' social connections and community integration?

##### ***For Sport and Physical Activity Organizations in Canada:***

How can your organization promote a progression from physical literacy to multisport participation before eventual specialization for new-to-Canada participants? Consider the importance of guiding participants through foundational



**Alphonso  
Davies**

Alphonso Davies was born in a refugee camp in Buduburam, Ghana, to Liberian parents who fled the civil war in Liberia. Life in the camp was challenging, with limited access to basic necessities. In 2005, when Alphonso was five years old, his family immigrated to Canada under a resettlement program, settling in Edmonton, Alberta.

Davies' introduction to soccer began at a young age in Edmonton. His passion for the sport was nurtured through local community programs and grassroots soccer leagues. He first played organized soccer at Free Footie, a free after-school program for underserved children. Davies' talent was quickly recognized. He excelled playing for local clubs before joining the Vancouver Whitecaps FC academy at age 14. He soon played for the Whitecaps' senior team, and made his debut for the Canadian men's national team at age 16. He has become one of Canada's standout players and helped the team qualify for the 2022 FIFA World Cup—Canada's first appearance in 36 years. In 2019, Davies transferred to German powerhouse Bayern Munich, and has become one of the world's best left-backs.

Beyond soccer, Alphonso Davies is a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador, using his platform to advocate for refugees worldwide. His story inspires countless young athletes, particularly those who are new to Canada, demonstrating how sport can be a pathway to success and integration.



**Rishav  
Sharma**

Rishav Sharma had grown up in India and after moving to Fort St. John, he sought a competitive badminton community so that he could continue playing the sport he'd excelled at in his home country, but found none. Determined to continue his sport, he founded the Peace Region Badminton Club in 2019, overcoming initial challenges by researching how he might start a club and reaching out to local schools to establish a program for youth. In addition to his work with youth, Sharma has also made a name for himself in the Para-badminton world, achieving a 28th place finish in the 2022 world rankings while balancing jobs in finance and personal training. He emphasizes the importance of passion, perseverance, and setting continuous goals, drawing from his own struggles as a newcomer to Canada. His inspiring story underscores the significance of creating opportunities in sports, especially for underserved communities.

stages that foster athleticism and competence across different sports, while being mindful of the risk of early over-specialization. What might it mean for your sport's development to ensure that specialization aligns with the sport's LTD pathway and occurs after exposure to a broad range of physical activities? How might encouraging a multisport approach support new-to-Canada participants to find the activities they love and remain in sport for life?

## 5. Safe, Inclusive and Welcoming

Long-Term Development emphasizes safety, inclusivity, and a welcoming environment. Safe sport encompasses the physical, psychological (neurobiological) and sexual safety of participants: physical safety requires proper facilities, equipment and coaching; psychological safety necessitates understanding and open communication; sexual safety requires every invested partner to contribute to a supportive environment that prioritizes the well-being of participants and actively prevents harassment and abuse with enforced policies and reporting mechanisms, in order to further empower these partners through awareness, response protocols, and transparent communications. Inclusivity values diversity, which plays an important role in eliminating discrimination. Through its design and focus on the inclusion, retention, and positive feelings of participants, LTD strives to tackle systemic barriers, stage by stage, to ensure quality sport is equitably accessible to everyone.

### ***For those who support new-to-Canada participants:***

How can you learn about and promote programs that ensure new-to-Canada participants feel safe, included, and welcomed as they engage in sport and physical activity? Consider the program environments that can foster social-emotional, psychological, physical, and cultural safety<sup>11</sup> by ensuring participants feel supported and understood. What might the creation of open communication channels and awareness around policies and reporting mechanisms mean for new-to-Canada participants, particularly in addressing any fears or concerns they might have about harassment

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<sup>11</sup> Safe Sport: <https://sportforlife.ca/safe-sport/>.

or discrimination—and how can your organization support in this information sharing? How might promoting inclusivity and helping to tackle systemic barriers ensure that all participants, regardless of background, have the opportunity to thrive and enjoy their experience?

***For sport and physical activity organizations in Canada:***

What role does your organization play in creating safe, inclusive, and welcoming environments that prioritize the social-emotional, psychological, physical, and cultural safety of new-to-Canada participants? Consider how incorporating comprehensive safety policies, training for coaches, and clear reporting mechanisms can prevent harassment and abuse, ensuring all participants feel supported. As well, consider the barriers that new-to-Canada participants face, including language and lack of information, and how your policies can be implemented in a way that is clear to, and benefits, everyone. How might inclusivity, diversity, and the elimination of discrimination be integrated into your sport's design, policies, and practices to ensure equitable access for all, including those who are new to Canada?

## **6. Excellence Takes Time**

Achieving excellence in sport and physical activity requires planned, systematic, and progressive participant engagement over sustained periods. Each participant has a unique non-linear path in sport and physical activity, with their own training, competition and recovery needs based on their development stage and individual goals.

***For those who support new-to-Canada participants:***

How might you learn about and support programs designed to recognize and respect the unique, non-linear paths that new-to-Canada participants may take in their sport and physical activity journey? Consider how providing individualized support, focusing on long-term engagement rather than immediate outcomes, can help new-to-Canada participants navigate their development, regardless of their starting point. How can you encourage and support



**Geraldine Heaney**

Geraldine Heaney, born in Lurgan, Northern Ireland, is one of the greatest players in women's hockey, despite the sport not being widely associated with her home country. Her family moved to Ontario, Canada, when she was just one year old, and she began playing hockey as a child. Heaney's career spanned 18 seasons, and is widely recognized for revolutionizing the defensive position in women's hockey, particularly for her offensive contributions from the back end. She was inducted into the IIHF Hall of Fame in 2008 and the Hockey Hall of Fame in 2013, followed by Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in 2014.

As women's hockey continues to grow, Heaney is proud of the role she and her peers played in advancing the sport, especially in inspiring a new generation of young female players. She believes in promoting the game globally, not just in Canada, as more and more young girls take up the sport.



**Bianca  
Andreescu**

Bianca Andreescu was born in Mississauga, Ontario, to Romanian parents who immigrated to Canada in the 1990s. Raised between two cultures, she split time in her early years between Romania and Canada, bringing a strong sense of identity and determination to her journey through sport.

Like many children of newcomers, Andreescu connected to her community through sport. Her passion for tennis took hold early, supported by her parents,, local coaches, and community programs. Her drive and resilience led to a historic moment in 2019 when she became the first Canadian woman to win a Grand Slam title, defeating Serena Williams in the US Open final.

The second-generation Canadian's path hasn't been without setbacks, including injuries and the pressure that comes with early success. She's been open about her mental health journey and the importance of balance, serving as a powerful role model for young athletes. Her story reflects the values at the heart of Sport for Life's approach, creating quality sport experiences that support development on and off the field, and helping newcomers and participants in general, find belonging, confidence, and the opportunity to thrive.

environments that encourage gradual improvement, recognizing that new-to-Canada participants may need time to adjust to both the sport and their new community, while also meeting their unique training and recovery needs?

### ***For Sport and Physical Activity Organizations in Canada:***

What strategies can your organization implement to ensure that participants' paths to excellence are seen as progressive and individualized, particularly for new-to-Canada participants? Consider how offering tailored, long-term engagement opportunities that focus on gradual skill development and sustainable progress can foster better long-term outcomes. How might you support new-to-Canada participants through non-linear journeys, respecting their unique development stages and individual goals, while also ensuring that they have access to the necessary resources, recovery methods, and coaching to build resilience and reach their full potential?

## **7. Lifelong Engagement**

This principle emphasizes the lifelong development of physical literacy and engagement in sport and physical activity for individuals from Active Start to Active for Life. It encompasses five key elements: maintaining optimal physical capacity throughout life; building physical literacy, fundamental movement skills and foundational sport skills; nurturing mental resilience and decision-making abilities; fostering effective communication and community belonging; and implementing a comprehensive, holistic approach that accommodates diverse needs and includes everyone. This principle promotes health and well-being across the lifespan.

### ***For those who support new-to-Canada participants:***

How can you learn about and promote pathways that encourage lifelong engagement in sport and physical activity for new-to-Canada participants, taking into account their varying levels of experience and unique needs? Consider how programs designed to foster physical literacy



and community belonging can contribute to the well-being of new-to-Canada participants, whether they are just starting their journey or looking to maintain lifelong activity. What approaches could your organization take to ensure new-to-Canada participants feel supported through their sport and physical activity journey, helping to ensure that the programs they take part in are teaching them skills while also helping them feel belonging?

### ***For Sport and Physical Activity Organizations in Canada:***

How can your programs and structures be designed to support lifelong engagement in sport and physical activity, ensuring that new-to-Canada participants of all ages and stages can build on their fundamental skills as they progress through different life stages? Consider how promoting physical literacy and resilience at every stage of development can help individuals maintain physical capacity and well-being throughout their lives. How might you ensure that all participants, including those who are new to Canada, feel a sense of community belonging, and have access to opportunities that support long-term engagement in your sport or physical activity?



**Donovan Bailey**

Donovan Bailey is a retired Jamaican-Canadian sprinter widely recognized as one of the greatest sprinters in history. Born in Manchester, Jamaica, he moved to Canada at the age of 13, later becoming a Canadian citizen and proudly representing his adopted country in international athletics.

Bailey is best known for his achievements in the 100 meters, where he set a world record and captured two gold medals at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta. He won the 100 metres in a then-world record time of 9.84 seconds—an electrifying performance that made him the first Canadian to win Olympic gold in that event and one of the fastest men in history. He also chiefly contributed to Canada's victory in the 4x100m relay, earning a second gold medal as part of a team that left a lasting mark on Canadian sport.

Bailey's powerful stride, confidence, and charisma made him a national icon and a global ambassador for Canadian athletics. Since retiring from competition in the early 2000s, he has built a successful career as a media personality, motivational speaker, and entrepreneur. His legacy continues to inspire new generations of athletes, particularly in the realm of track and field, where his contributions helped elevate the profile of the sport across the country.

# Section Three

## Facilitating New-to-Canada Participants' Engagement in Quality Sport, Physical Activity, and through Physical Literacy Development



While those who support new-to-Canada participants to settle in Canada might not be directly responsible for providing quality sport and physical activity programming, they can still support new-to-Canada participants' engagement through encouragement and awareness. It is therefore important that those who support new-to-Canada participants:

- understand the benefits of sport and physical activity involvement,
- are aware of local quality sport and physical activity programs and opportunities, and
- play an active role in both informing new-to-Canada participants about what opportunities exist and supporting them to take part.

Once these participants have become aware of the opportunities as well as how to access and take part in them, then it is up to the sport and physical activity organization leaders—the coaches, programmers, administrators, facility managers—to ensure these participants have a great first involvement and meaningful engagement thereafter. This section is directed specifically at sport and physical activity organizations.





# Physical Literacy

Regardless of who your participants are and where they have come from, it is important to offer quality programs that develop physical literacy.<sup>1</sup> This is best done when new-to-Canada participants can learn a wide range of skills through exposure to different sports and activities as well as environments.



Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.<sup>2</sup>

When it comes to children, ideally they will develop a solid base in physical literacy through participation in a wide variety of activities. Then, when they are a bit older they will be ready to choose activities, focusing on training and competition that suits them.

When it comes to adults and older adults, participating in multiple activities is ideal, but the most important thing is just being regularly physically active. For those who don't get the opportunity to develop physical literacy in their younger years, it is never too late to start. However, the approach to the development of movement skills, confidence to participate, and motivation and enjoyment will be different depending on the age and experience of each person.

## Physical literacy

is the...



FIGURE 5: Definition of Physical Literacy

### Physical literacy leads to:

- the physical skills and fitness,
- the attitudes and emotions that motivate you to be active,
- the knowledge and understanding of how, why and when you move, and
- the social skills to be active with others.

<sup>1</sup> Developing Physical Literacy: <https://sportforlife.ca/portfolio-item/developing-physical-literacy-building-a-new-normal-for-all-canadians/>

<sup>2</sup> International Physical Literacy Association, May, 2014: <https://physicalliteracy.ca/physical-literacy/consensus-statement/>

# Quality Sport and Physical Activity

Quality sport and physical activity happens when qualified, caring people provide well-run programs that are geared to the needs and abilities of the participants. Quality sport is more than playing a game; it includes developing physical literacy as participants learn foundational sport skills. People enjoy participating in a holistic, fun, fair, safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment to learn and play. While we often refer to these elements as comprising quality “sport,” most of them are required for making a quality experience in any physical activity or recreation program. Here are some considerations:

**Good programs**, that are well run, are:

- Developmentally appropriate
- Participant-centred
- Progressive and challenging
- Planned and competition is meaningful

**Good people**, leading well-run programs, include:

- Coaches and officials
- Leaders
- Parents
- Partners

**Good places**, creating good feelings, are:

- Inclusive and welcoming
- Safe
- Fun and fair
- Holistic

Sport and physical activity leaders, coaches and programmers can reflect on the Quality Sport Checklist for Communities and Clubs (found on pages 50–52), then utilize the Community Scan—Good People, Good Places, Good Programs (found on page 58). Consider the following questions:

- What inclusive programs are being offered in your community?
- Who are the people that make inclusive sport and physical activity happen in your community?
- Where are the places that are welcoming?

## Quality sport

based on Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity is...



FIGURE 6: Definition of Quality Sport

## ! TAKE ACTION

For an easy-to-use and more comprehensive list, please refer to the **Quality Sport Checklist for Communities and Clubs<sup>3</sup>** to review your organization's approach to providing good programs, people, and places.

3 Quality Sport Checklist for Communities and Clubs: <https://sportforlife.ca/portfolio-item/quality-sport-checklist-for-communities-and-clubs/>



## QUALITY SPORT CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNITIES AND CLUBS

Based on Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity

Quality sport and physical activity is achieved when the right people do the right things at the right times, resulting in positive experiences for participants. It is based on a Long-Term Development approach. It has been designed with everyone in mind, centring the aspirations of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility. This checklist can be used as a tool by community and club leaders to assess and improve the quality of their sport programs.

**Good programs, that are developmentally appropriate, are:**

### Participant-centred

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ability, age, size, and maturity are all considered when grouping participants.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Participants are actively engaged in the game or activity and fully included by teammates.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | All holistic aspects of participation are considered, including mental (intellectual and emotional), physical, cultural and spiritual. |

### Progressive and Challenging

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Participants are learning and building on their existing skills.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | There are options to make an activity more or less challenging based on participant's skills and capabilities.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | In the early stages, participants get to play different positions and/or try different events and sports ( <a href="https://physicalliteracy.ca">physicalliteracy.ca</a> ). |

### Well-Planned

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Programs and practices are well-prepared and are delivered in context of seasonal and annual plans.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The program is aligned with the national sport organization's Long-Term Athlete Development framework, or when possible, has been designed by a national sport organization ( <a href="https://sportforlife.ca/quality-sport-programs">sportforlife.ca/quality-sport-programs</a> ). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The club connects participants to developmentally appropriate programs and opportunities, which may include different levels (tiers), types of play, competition, or activities.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | In the early stages, leaders emphasize skill development over winning.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | In the early stages, programs develop fundamental movement skills, in addition to sport-specific skills.   |



<b>Designed for Meaningful Competition</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Based on stage of development, the participants are playing small-sided games with fewer players, competing in shorter distances, or playing for modified lengths of time ( <a href="https://sportforlife.ca/long-term-development">sportforlife.ca/long-term-development</a> ).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rules are modified based on the ability and stage of the participants.
<input type="checkbox"/>	In the early stages, teams, groups, lines, or categories are balanced so that participants of similar ability compete against each other, giving everyone a chance to struggle and succeed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	In the early stages, all participants get to play and practice equally. Elimination competition formats are not used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Competition is timed appropriately for learning, and is affordable and accessible.
<b>Good people, who are caring and knowledgeable, include:</b>	
<b>Coaches, Officials, Instructors, and Teachers</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who are trained and qualified (e.g. National Coaching Certification Program [ <a href="https://coach.ca">coach.ca</a> ], Aboriginal Coaching Modules [ <a href="https://aboriginalsportcircle.ca">aboriginalsportcircle.ca</a> ], Gender Equity [ <a href="https://womenandsport.ca">womenandsport.ca</a> ], Sport for Life certifications [ <a href="https://sportforlife.ca">sportforlife.ca</a> ], HIGH FIVE® [ <a href="https://highfive.org">highfive.org</a> ]).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who are provided with, and partake in, ongoing learning opportunities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who mentor and build capacity for future coaches, officials, instructors, and teachers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who are screened ( <a href="https://coach.ca/responsiblecoaching">coach.ca/responsiblecoaching</a> ) and follow policies and procedures on child protection ( <a href="https://protectchildren.ca">protectchildren.ca</a> ), and injury prevention ( <a href="https://parachutecanada.org">parachutecanada.org</a> ).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who assess participants' developmental stage, and design programs and practices considering Long-Term Development key factors (e.g. sensitive periods).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who understand developing physical literacy and how to apply it in programs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who are ethical ( <a href="https://truesportpur.ca/true-sport-principles">truesportpur.ca/true-sport-principles</a> ) and demonstrate good social, communication, and leadership skills.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who demonstrate the organization's stated principles and integrate values based sport in training and competition
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who use constructive language, communicate equitably and clearly, and involve participants in discussion and feedback.

<b>Parents and Caregivers</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who are knowledgeable about and encourage Quality Sport ( <a href="https://activeforlife.com">activeforlife.com</a> ).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who are respectful ( <a href="https://respectgroupinc.com/respect-in-sport/#parent-program">respectgroupinc.com/respect-in-sport/#parent-program</a> ).
<b>Partners and Leaders</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who ensure the organization operates with clear lines of responsibility and authority ( <a href="https://sirc.ca/policy-makers-government-officials">sirc.ca/policy-makers-government-officials</a> ).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who are accountable for decisions, policies, risk management, and operational practices as well as utilizing the latest in active and safe tools.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who regularly assess, continually improve, and modernize governance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who seek opportunities to engage with programs and organizations in the community, province/territory and nation-wide to advance Quality Sport and increase opportunities for participants.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who use sport for social change and community development.
<b>Good places, that create good feelings, are:</b>	
<b>Inclusive and Welcoming</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Everyone feels safe and that they belong regardless of ability and background ( <a href="https://cdpp.ca">cdpp.ca</a> ).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Access is affordable and barrier free.
<b>Fun and Fair</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilities and equipment are modified for the ability, size, and stage of the participants.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Programs and environments are FUN ( <a href="https://changingthegameproject.com/can-youth-sports-fun-competitive">changingthegameproject.com/can-youth-sports-fun-competitive</a> ).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Programs run on a regular basis, have appropriate attendance, and are delivered in a fair manner.
<b>Safe</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Equipment is in good condition.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilities are safe; the space is suitable, clean, well lit, and well maintained as well as personnel trained in first aid.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adheres to Safe Sport, the facility has policies and information readily available addressing bullying, harassment, emotional, physical and sexual misconduct, concussions, etc. ( <a href="https://sportaide.ca/en">sportaide.ca/en</a> ).

# Stage-by-Stage Considerations

Engaging those who are new to Canada in sport and physical activity using the principles of Long-Term Development (LTD) requires thoughtful, compassionate and inclusive approaches at each development stage. It is important to consider the challenging experiences new-to-Canada participants may have had before making it to your program, and many of them have had their lives interrupted. This is why it is so important to be flexible and adaptable, and able to tailor programs to suit the specific needs of participants.

As well, new-to-Canada participants may come with varied skill levels, cultural backgrounds, and experiences in sport, so each stage must emphasize accessibility, cultural sensitivity, and support. Using an LTD approach to engage new-to-Canada participants ensures that sport and physical activity are enjoyable and meaningful for everyone. Each stage supports the development of capabilities (types of knowledge, attitudes, attributes and skills) as well as confidence and motivation, fostering a sense of belonging and building a foundation for lifelong participation.

A new-to-Canada participant’s journey in sport and physical activity is unique. While it begins with awareness of an activity, which leads to being involved and learning the fundamentals, these individuals could take a variety of pathways depending on their characteristics and capabilities. Ideally, these pathways will lead the individual to achieving their potential, and then being active for life.



## 1. Active Start

(Roughly ages 0–6)

**Focus:** Introduce basic movement and play in a safe, enjoyable environment. Include activities that develop locomotor, object manipulation and balance capabilities, as well as executive function.

### Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasize playful activities, both structured and unstructured, that introduce fundamental movement skills like running, jumping, throwing, and wheeling.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Involve parents to create comfort and familiarity, encouraging them to support physical activity as a family habit.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use non-competitive, inclusive games that are easy for children to understand, especially if language barriers exist.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide culturally relevant activities and celebrate diverse games or movements from the children’s backgrounds.</li></ul>





## 2. FUNdamentals

(Roughly ages 6–9)

**Focus:** Develop fundamental movement and foundational sport skills through active participation and FUN. Focus on developing the ABCs (agility, balance, coordination, speed) of athleticism, while continuing to build executive function.

### *Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer low-cost or free programs with accessible equipment and resources, reducing barriers to entry.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use visuals, simple instructions, and demonstrations for skill instruction to accommodate language diversity.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prioritize inclusive games that encourage teamwork, cooperation, and fun over competition, easing any concerns about skill differences.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide culturally sensitive guidance to parents, explaining the benefits of physical literacy in an accessible way.</li></ul>



## 3. Learn to Train

(From the end of FUNdamentals to the onset of adolescent growth spurt, roughly 9–12)

**Focus:** Teach foundational sport skills and build physical literacy across multiple sports. Incorporate development of social and mental capabilities while introducing sport-specific technical-tactical capabilities.

### *Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce various sports to encourage exploration and help children find activities they enjoy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure coaches are trained in cultural awareness, building inclusive spaces where new-to-Canada participants feel comfortable participating and trying new activities.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer programs in community-friendly settings to reduce travel costs and logistical challenges.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage families with information on the long-term benefits of sport and physical activity to promote sustained involvement.</li></ul>



#### 4. Train to Train

(Duration of the adolescent growth spurt, roughly ages 12–16)

**Focus:** Build sport-specific skills and physical capabilities, including tactical awareness and ancillary skills, while also continuing to refine social and mental capabilities.

##### *Considerations for new-to-Canada athletes:*<sup>4</sup>

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer a range of sports and activity levels to account for varying skill levels and comfort, promoting progression at the individual's pace.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide financial support or equipment assistance programs, addressing potential economic barriers.</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partner with schools, community centres, and settlement organizations to reach youth and provide accessible entry points.</li></ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure mental health and wellness support, as this age group may experience stress related to adjustment, academics, and competitive sport.</li></ul> |



#### 5. Train to Compete

(Generally beyond the end of the adolescent growth spurt and dependent on sport progress, except in the case of early specialization acrobatic sports. This stage features provincial, junior national or early national level)

**Focus:** Refine sport-specific skills and tactics as well as mental and social capabilities in preparation for high-performance competition.

##### *Considerations for new-to-Canada athletes:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize the unique journeys of new-to-Canada athletes and offer pathways that accommodate their needs and timelines.</li></ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote an inclusive team environment, celebrating cultural diversity and fostering camaraderie among teammates.</li></ul>                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide mentorship from experienced athletes who can guide new-to-Canada athletes through the demands of competitive sport.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support connections with coaches or community leaders who understand the challenges of integrating into a new culture and sport system.</li></ul> |

<sup>4</sup> Stewart Vella, Scott Pierce, Martin Camiré, Tarkington J. Newman, Dany J. MacDonald, Michel Milistetd, Leisha Strachan & Fernando Santos (13 Feb 2025): What is quality youth sport programming? A Delphi study of international scholar perspectives, *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, DOI: 10.1080/10413200.2025.2455171



## 6. Train to Win

(Dependent on sport progress.  
Competing at the highest levels:  
Olympics, Paralympics, World  
Championships)

**Focus:** Refine advanced capabilities for elite-level competition.

### *Considerations for new-to-Canada athletes:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engage multicultural role models and coaches to encourage new-to-Canada athletes to pursue high-performance sport.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Address logistical, financial, and psychological support to help high-performance athletes manage any unique challenges, including visas, training resources, and family support systems.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Promote anti-discrimination and cultural awareness within high-level competition environments to support new-to-Canada athletes' sense of belonging.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Emphasize both athletic development and understanding of Canadian sports culture, fostering a balance between cultural identity and national representation.</li></ul>



## 7. Active for Life

(Anytime after Learn to Train, ideally  
once a foundation of physical literacy  
has been developed)

**Focus:** Encourage lifelong participation in physical activity and sport, whether for competition, fitness or both. Provide opportunities for new-to-Canada participants to stay involved in sport as coaches, officials or administrators.

### *Considerations for new-to-Canada participants:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Offer community-based sports and recreational activities that are affordable and culturally inclusive.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Encourage family and community involvement to support physical activity as a shared, enjoyable experience.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide programs in accessible locations such as community centres and parks, making participation easy for new-to-Canada participants.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with community groups to design programs that honour cultural sports and recreational activities, creating a familiar and welcoming environment.</li></ul>

## General Long-Term Development Considerations for New-to-Canada Participants:

- **Cultural Sensitivity and Representation:** Incorporate diverse sports and culturally significant activities to make new-to-Canada participants feel at home and appreciated.
- **Communication and Language Support:** Provide multilingual materials, visual aids, and easy-to-understand instructions, especially in early development stages.
- **Family and Community Involvement:** While some new-to-Canada parents cannot attend sport and physical activity programs due to barriers such as work, language training, other family commitments, it is still important to engage them as well as community members in order to create a support network that sustains new-to-Canada participants' involvement in sport and physical activity.
- **Accessibility:** Provide low-cost or subsidized options and connect participants with funding or equipment assistance where needed. Ensure programs are available and adapted as required to suit the needs of the participants.
- **Holistic Development and Well-being:** Recognize that new-to-Canada participants may face challenges related to adjusting to a new culture, and ensure programs address both physical and mental health.

Using LTD principles to engage new-to-Canada participants ensures that sport and physical activity is accessible, enjoyable, and meaningful for everyone. Each stage supports the appropriate development and refinement of social, mental, physical and technical-tactical capabilities, as well as confidence and motivation, which fosters a sense of belonging and builds a foundation for lifelong participation.





# Community Scan—Good People, Good Places, Good Programs

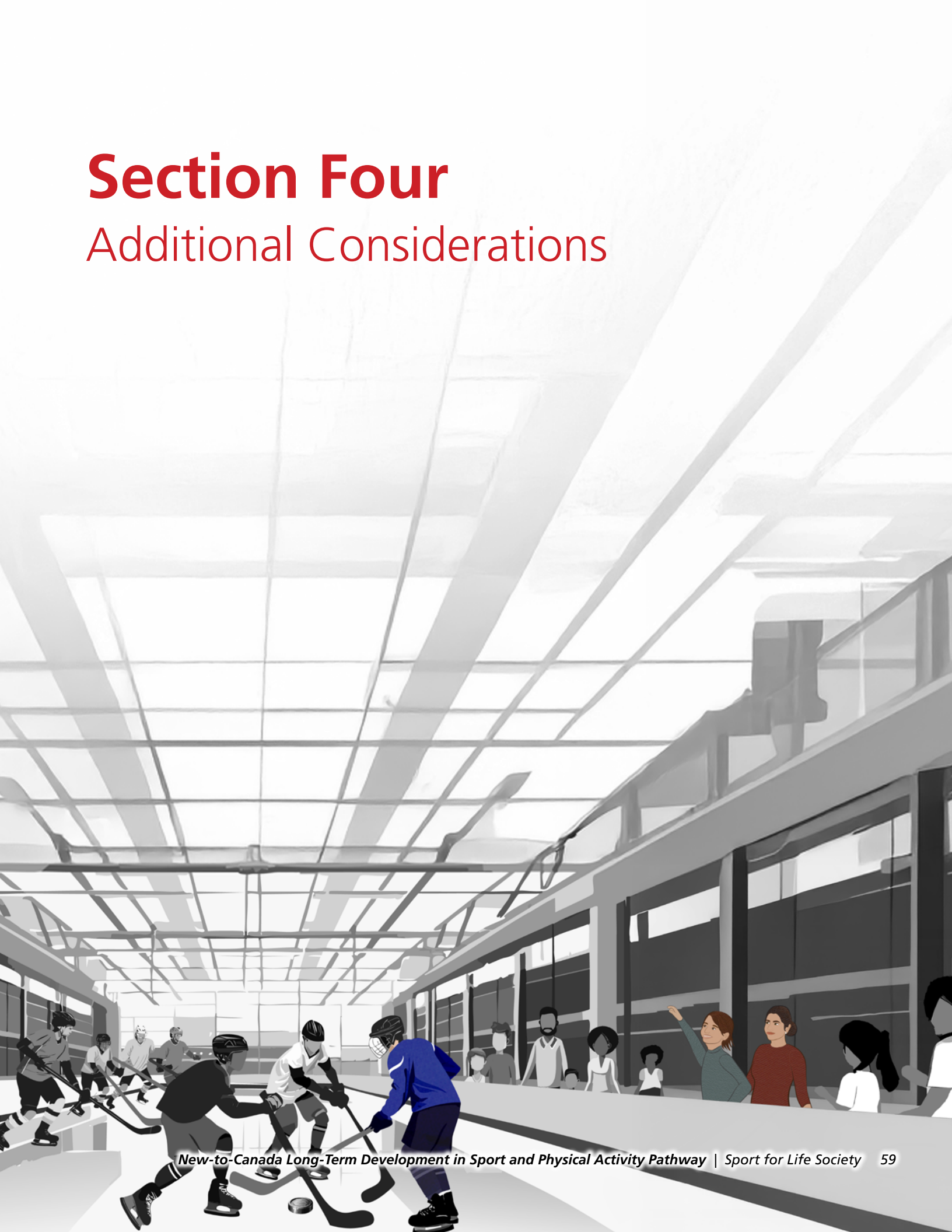
When sport and physical activity leaders, coaches and programmers are aware of these stage-by-stage considerations, as well as the elements of quality sport, they can put this information into action by utilizing the fillable Community Scan template below. For more information on how to plan, activate and evaluate, check out [Sport for Life for Every New-to-Canada Participant 2.1](#).<sup>1</sup>

Community:		
Population:		
Approximate number of New to Canada children and youth participants:		
Approximate number of New to Canada children and youth participating in sports/activities:		
<b>People</b> (names and roles of those who support inclusive sport and activity)	<b>Places</b> (that support inclusive sport and activity)	<b>Programs</b> (that are available and for what age groups)

<sup>1</sup> Sport for Life for Every New-to-Canada Participant 2.1: <https://sportforlife.ca/portfolio-item/new-to-canada-participants/>

# Section Four

## Additional Considerations





# Athlete Development Matrix

The Athlete Development Matrix (ADM) outlines the capabilities (types of knowledge, attitudes, attributes and skills) that participants need at each stage of the Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity (LTD) framework. It consists of four interrelated domains—mental, physical, social, and sport-specific technical-tactical—and is connected to the social and cultural contexts that surround participants as well.

The way individuals interpret and respond to their own thoughts and emotions, as well as to the words and actions of others, is shaped by these social and cultural contexts. Culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs, and practices of an identifiable group, which

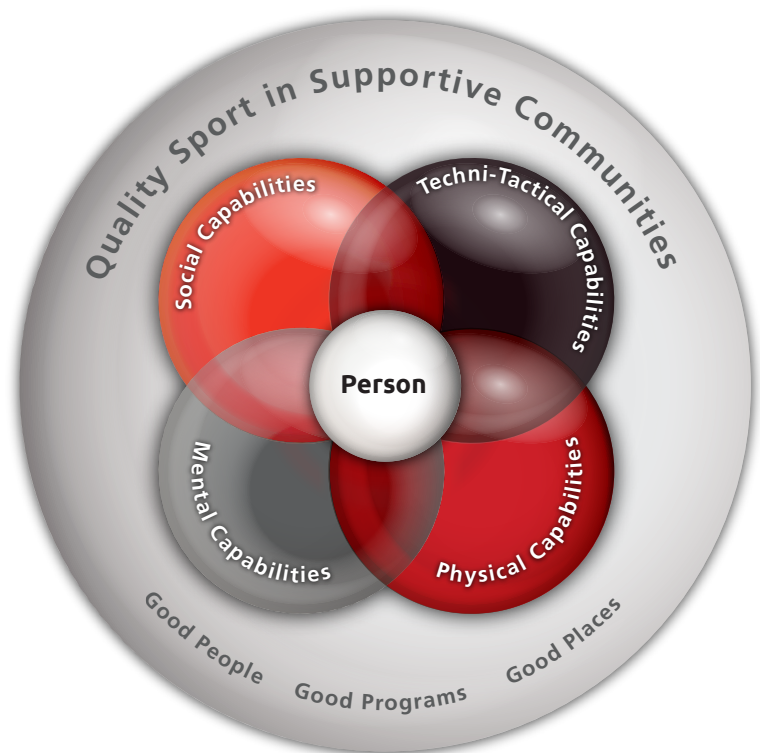


FIGURE 7: Athlete Development Matrix



may include factors such as race, ethnicity, nationality, language, spirituality, (dis)ability, gender, or sexuality. It can also include affiliations based on geographic location, workplace, school, or recreational activities, such as being part of a sports team.

Cultural awareness in relation to athlete development is particularly important when supporting and interacting with new-to-Canada participants, as cultural differences can significantly influence behaviour and communication. For example, making direct eye contact may be a sign of confidence and engagement in some cultures, while in others it may be perceived as disrespectful or confrontational. Understanding an athlete's cultural background, values, and beliefs will help lead to effective communication and a learning environment that supports holistic development.

Finally, the ADM takes a participant-centred approach and understands that an individual's development pathway isn't linear. This is another key consideration for new-to-Canada participants, as their backgrounds, ages and developmental stages, and entry points into the Canadian sport and physical activity ecosystem can vary so greatly. By addressing the individual needs of each participant, the ADM provides a flexible foundation for sport organizations and practitioners to build on, leading to optimal participant development.

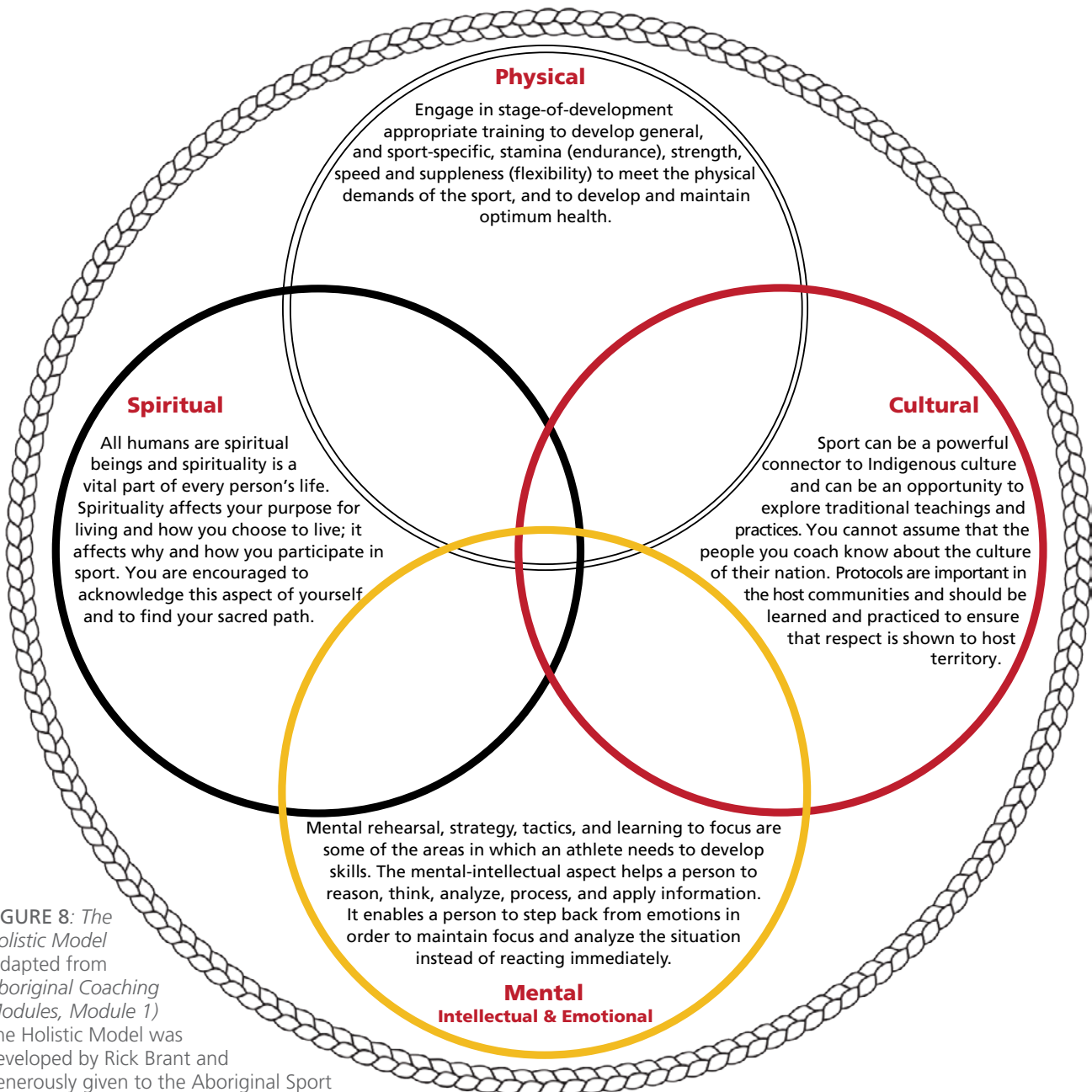
As a person-centred model of athlete development, the ADM is not intended to be prescriptive in nature. Rather, the focus of development is on the person first, including each athlete's unique identity, needs, preferences and abilities. The capabilities proposed in the ADM provide a flexible guide from which sport organizations and practitioners can select and adapt based on what an athlete needs to develop optimally.





# Indigenous Relationships

Some newcomers to Canada may be indigenous to their home country and can relate to the Holistic Model, which is based off of the Medicine Wheel. The Holistic Model represents an Indigenous framework emphasizing balance and interconnection between four key aspects of life: Physical, Cultural, Mental, and Spiritual (similar yet different to the four domains of the Athlete Development Matrix). This model aligns well with the experiences of new-to-Canada participants, particularly as sport and physical activity can address these aspects in a way that fosters well-being, integration, and personal growth.



**FIGURE 8:** *The Holistic Model* (adapted from *Aboriginal Coaching Modules, Module 1*)  
The Holistic Model was developed by Rick Brant and generously given to the Aboriginal Sport Circle for its use.

## Physical Aspect

The physical aspect emphasizes maintaining a healthy body through activity, nutrition, and balance. In the Holistic Model, physical health supports and is supported by the other aspects.

- For new-to-Canada participants: Physical activity helps manage the stresses of relocation, promotes health, and provides an introduction to Canadian recreational or competitive sports systems.
- Recommendation: Offering culturally inclusive sports programs can encourage participation and physical wellness, providing both health benefits and a sense of routine.

## Cultural Aspect

The cultural aspect emphasizes traditions, community, and identity. It serves as a foundation for self-understanding and connection to the collective.

- For new-to-Canada participants: Sport becomes a medium for cultural exchange, where their own traditions can be shared while learning about Canadian culture and Indigenous values.
- Recommendation: Programs that integrate cultural storytelling, traditional games, or partnerships with Indigenous communities can help foster cultural respect and understanding, which contributes to TRC Calls to Action 93 & 94.<sup>1</sup>



Learn how the Government of Canada is responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 93 to 94.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 93 to 94: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524506203836/1557512859985>





## Mental, Intellectual and Emotional Aspect

This aspect focuses on emotional well-being, learning, and personal growth. It advocates for the integration of knowledge and self-reflection in a supportive environment.

- For new-to-Canada participants: Participation in sport offers stress relief, builds confidence, and provides opportunities to learn new skills. It can also support language acquisition and communication skills.
- Recommendation: Team sports create environments where new-to-Canada participants build resilience, manage emotions, and form relationships that support mental well-being.

## Spiritual Aspect

The spiritual aspect emphasizes meaning, purpose, and connection to the self, others, and the natural world.

- For new-to-Canada participants: Sport and physical activity can help them find purpose and connect with their community. Activities that focus on mindfulness, teamwork, and shared goals can promote a sense of belonging and spiritual fulfillment.
- Recommendation: Programs that incorporate nature-based activities, reflection, or mindfulness practices align with this aspect, helping new-to-Canada participants feel grounded and connected.

By aligning sport and physical activity programs with the four aspects of the Holistic Model, Canada can provide a more meaningful pathway for those who are new to thrive in their new community.

# Coaches and Officials<sup>2</sup>



## TAKE ACTION

Please use the Coaches and Officials Self Assessment Checklist to evaluate your organization's inclusivity in coach recruitment.

Involvement as technical officials offers new-to-Canada participants a unique way to connect with Canadian sports culture, gain professional skills, and contribute to their communities.

Sport organizations can help new-to-Canada participants become coaches and officials in Canadian sport and contribute to high-quality, inclusive, and culturally rich officiating teams. An inclusive approach benefits Canadian sport by broadening perspectives and building a more diverse, dynamic officiating community.



## COACHES AND OFFICIALS CHECKLIST

### Create Accessible Entry Points



Provide clear and simplified pathways for new-to-Canada participants to become coaches or technical officials. This includes entry-level courses that don't require extensive previous experience, making it easier to get involved.



Offer beginner-level courses that cover rules, responsibilities, and basic game regulations in an easy-to-understand way. Tailor training to accommodate language barriers and ensure new-to-Canada participants feel welcome. Example: [NCCP Coach Initiation in Sport](#)

### Provide Cultural Awareness Training



Sport organizations and existing officials should undergo cultural sensitivity training to create inclusive, respectful environments for new-to-Canada officials.



New-to-Canada participants often bring unique perspectives and knowledge from sports popular in their home countries. Embrace this diversity by valuing and integrating their insights, which can enrich the officiating team and sports community. Example: [Intercultural Skills in Sport eLearning](#)

### Support Language and Communication Needs



Provide training resources in multiple languages, where possible, or offer interpreters to help break down language barriers.



Training sessions can include visual demonstrations and hands-on learning for those who may need additional help with language comprehension, ensuring they understand key concepts.

<sup>2</sup> This section was informed by the Coaching Association of Canada's Voices of Community report: [https://coach.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2025-03/voices-from-the-community-reportcac\\_eng\\_final.pdf](https://coach.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2025-03/voices-from-the-community-reportcac_eng_final.pdf).



<b>Mentorship and Peer Support Programs</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pair new-to-Canada officials with seasoned mentors who can offer guidance, support, and encouragement. Mentors can help them navigate the social and procedural aspects of officiating in a new cultural context.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a supportive network where new-to-Canada officials can share experiences, ask questions, and learn from one another.
<b>Address Logistical and Economic Barriers</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider subsidies or financial aid for registration fees, uniforms, travel, and equipment, as new-to-Canada participants may face economic challenges.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organize training sessions and officiating opportunities in accessible locations and at times that accommodate other responsibilities, such as work or family commitments.
<b>Recognize and Value Previous Experience</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Some new-to-Canada participants may have officiating experience or certifications from their home countries. Provide pathways to recognize and integrate this experience, allowing them to participate at an appropriate level more quickly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If possible, offer opportunities in sports that new-to-Canada participants are already familiar with, as it can boost their confidence and comfort in the role.
<b>Continuous Skill Development and Growth</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide access to further certification and training levels as they gain experience. Offer them long-term growth pathways, from entry-level officiating to more advanced roles.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Many sports have country-specific rules or protocols, and new-to-Canada participants may need additional training to understand nuances in officiating in the Canadian context. Example: <a href="#">Engaging Those Who Are New to Canada via Physical Literacy and Quality Sport</a>
<b>Promote Inclusivity and Diversity within Coaching and Officiating Teams</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage diversity by actively recruiting new-to-Canada participants, creating a sense of belonging, and valuing diverse backgrounds within officiating teams.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure anti-discrimination policies are in place, and that new-to-Canada officials have avenues for reporting and addressing any issues related to prejudice or bias.

For more information on coaching, visit [coach.ca](https://coach.ca).

# Governance—Board Representation by New-to-Canada Participants

Having new-to-Canada participants on boards introduces fresh perspectives, innovative approaches, and representation for communities often underrepresented in decision-making.

## Create an Inclusive and Accessible Recruitment Process

- Develop a clear and welcoming recruitment process, ensuring role descriptions are accessible and reflect the diversity of the community.
- Partner with community organizations, settlement agencies, and multicultural groups to promote board opportunities, making the positions more visible and accessible to new-to-Canada participants.

## Provide Orientation and Ongoing Training

- Offer orientation sessions that explain board responsibilities, governance principles, and LTD goals, while also considering any cultural adjustments that may help new-to-Canada participants feel comfortable and informed.
- Provide training, including continuous learning in governance, strategic planning, budgeting, and Canadian sports systems, to build confidence and support the unique needs of new-to-Canada board members.

## Mentorship and Peer Support Programs

- Set up a mentorship program that pairs new-to-Canada board members with experienced directors who can offer guidance and support, helping them navigate the nuances of board operations.
- Create a community of practice where new-to-Canada directors can share insights, discuss experiences, and ask questions in a supportive environment.

## Cultural Awareness and Diversity Training for All Board Members

- Conduct training for the entire board on cultural awareness, inclusivity, and diversity, fostering an environment where new-to-Canada participants feel respected, heard, and valued.
- Encourage board members to appreciate the unique insights new-to-Canada participants bring, especially related to engaging underrepresented communities and introducing new ideas for inclusive programming.

## Valuing Previous Leadership Experience

- New-to-Canada participants may bring significant leadership experience from their home countries. Recognize their expertise and transferable skills, integrating their insights into board deliberations and decision-making.
- Allow new-to-Canada participants to focus on areas that align with their expertise, such as community outreach, finance, or youth engagement, leveraging their strengths for the board's benefit.

## Language Accessibility

- Use clear, jargon-free language in board documents and meeting agendas to reduce potential language barriers.
- Where possible, provide translation services or language support to ensure that new-to-Canada board members can fully engage in discussions and contribute confidently.

## Logistical and Financial Barriers

- Provide stipends or reimbursements for travel, childcare, or meeting-related expenses to make board participation accessible, especially if new-to-Canada participants face financial constraints.
- Offer hybrid or virtual meeting options to accommodate board members who may have other work or family responsibilities, making participation more manageable.

## Well-Being and Work-Life Balance

- New-to-Canada participants may be adjusting to life in their new country, so providing flexibility in responsibilities and supporting work-life balance can help ease their integration onto the board.
- Offer resources related to mental well-being and support, acknowledging the challenges of adjusting to new environments and responsibilities.

Engaging new-to-Canada participants in board roles within Canadian sport organizations can enhance diversity, improve the inclusivity of sport programs, and reflect the growing multicultural landscape of Canadian communities.

# Safe Sport

It is crucial for Canadian sport leaders, coaches and programmers to understand and adhere to Canadian Safe Sport principles when coaching and providing programs for new-to-Canada participants. These principles ensure a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all participants, particularly those from diverse cultural backgrounds. New-to-Canada participants may be vulnerable and also face unique challenges due to language barriers, different cultural norms, or unfamiliarity with appropriate Canadian sport practices. It's essential that leaders, coaches and programmers are trained to recognize these challenges and provide support accordingly. By adhering to Safe Sport principles, coaches can help prevent abuse, harassment, and discrimination, in turn, helping new-to-Canada participants to build trust and confidence in the sport environment. This commitment not only promotes the physical, mental and social-emotional well-being of new-to-Canada participants, but also encourages their full participation and integration into Canadian society, while cultivating a positive, equitable experience.

Canadian Safe Sport considerations for new-to-Canada participants are essential to ensure that individuals from diverse backgrounds feel welcome, respected, and protected in their sport experiences. New-to-Canada participants may have different understandings of what constitutes appropriate behaviour, boundaries, and expectations in sports, so it is important to educate both athletes and coaches about inclusion, safety, and respectful behaviour. Coaches and programmers should be sensitive to cultural differences and aware of potential challenges. For instance, making direct eye contact with another person can either show



## TAKE ACTION

Please visit [Sport for Life Safe Sport](https://sportforlife.ca/safe-sport/) and [Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport](https://cces.ca/) to access tools, training, and guidance for creating safer, more inclusive sport environments. Use these resources to review your organization's current practices, ensure alignment with Canadian Safe Sport principles, and support the well-being and integration of new-to-Canada participants.

<https://sportforlife.ca/safe-sport/>  
<https://cces.ca/>

confidence and attentiveness, or be considered aggressive and confrontational, depending on one's culture. Knowing an athlete's cultural background, values and beliefs will help coaches to communicate effectively and establish environments that support overall development.

A Safe Sport approach not only emphasizes creating a welcoming, non-discriminatory environment, but it also ensures new-to-Canada participants are aware of their rights and have access to appropriate resources for reporting any concerns. By adhering to these principles, sport programs can help build trust, foster positive relationships, and ensure that all athletes, regardless of their background, feel safe and supported in their sport and physical activity journey.

Whether new-to-Canada participants enter the sport system as athletes, coaches, officials or administrators, it is important that they are provided with the resources and guidance to learn about safe, ethical and appropriate approaches to sport delivery. Various organizations provide these resources, and depending on a new-to-Canada participant's role in the system, it is important that they are provided with the necessary materials and education.



# Generating Revenue to Implement the New-to-Canada Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Pathway

Implementing the new-to-Canada Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity Pathway (NLTD) requires sustainable revenue streams for sport and physical activity organizations. This outline provides a range of ideas for how these organizations can generate revenue to support pathway implementation.

## Revenue Generation Strategies

### National Sport Organizations (NSOs)

- **Government Funding & Grants:** Apply for federal funding from Sport Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and Canadian Heritage for newcomer inclusion initiatives. As well as seek funding from national agencies such as the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), and Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC).
- **Corporate Sponsorship:** Develop sponsorship packages targeting corporations with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) commitments including engaging sport brands, financial institutions, and companies that support newcomer integration (e.g., banks, telecom, grocery chains).
- **Partnerships:** Establish long-term partnerships with national organizations like YMCA, Jumpstart, and KidSport.
- **Philanthropy:** Develop fundraising campaigns targeting corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.
- **Leverage platforms:** CanadaHelps and GoFundMe are examples to crowdsource funds for inclusive sport programs.
- **Donations:** Leverage charitable foundations to support scholarships for new-to-Canada athletes and coaches.

### Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations (PSOs)

- **Provincial Government Grants & Municipal Funding:** Apply for provincial grants supporting multicultural sport inclusion and diversity in recreation.
- **Sponsorship & Partnerships:** Secure provincial sponsorships from businesses with regional outreach (e.g., insurance companies, credit unions, local retailers).
- **Fundraising & Crowdfunding:** Organize charity events such or establish crowdfunding campaigns through platforms like Kickstarter to support pathway implementation.

## Local Sport Organizations (LSOs)

- **Community Grants:** Apply for funding through municipal recreation and community development programs.
- **Local Government Support:** Work with local settlement agencies that receive government funding to support sport integration.
- **Corporate Sponsorship & Small Business Support:** Engage local businesses such as grocery stores, restaurants, and community banks for sponsorship.
- **Community Fundraising & Events:** Collaborate with local cultural groups to co-host events (e.g. sport festivals, family fun days, and fundraising runs/walks) that celebrate diversity through sport.

## Cross-Sector Collaboration & Shared Revenue Models

- **NSO-PSO-LSO Partnerships:** Develop joint funding applications to national and provincial government agencies.
- **Settlement Agencies & Sport Partnerships:** Work with organizations such as the YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, and local settlement agencies to share costs and funding.
- **Academic & Research Grants:** Partner with universities for research grants focused on sport and newcomer integration.

## Revenue Generation Strategies for those who support new-to-Canada participants in the Implementation of the NLTD

Organizations that support new-to-Canada participants play a critical role in integrating them into Canadian society, including sport participation. To sustain their efforts and support the implementation of the NLTD, these agencies need diversified revenue streams. Below are key strategies they can use to generate revenue.

### Government Funding & Grants

- **Federal & Provincial Government Grants**
  - **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC):** Apply for grants related to newcomer integration and community development.
  - **Canadian Heritage & Sport Canada:** Seek funding from sport inclusion and multiculturalism initiatives.
  - **Provincial Ministries of Immigration and Sport:** Leverage provincial funding opportunities focused on inclusive recreation and sport participation.
- **Municipal & Regional Funding:** Access community development grants from cities, municipalities or local economic development agencies supporting newcomer programs.
- **Multicultural & Diversity Grants:** Apply for funding from diversity and inclusion-focused organizations such as the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and United Way Canada.

### Corporate Sponsorship & Partnerships

- **Corporate Sponsorship:** Develop sponsorship packages targeting businesses committed to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), particularly in newcomer support, diversity, and community engagement.

- Target industries that benefit from a strong newcomer client base, such as:
  - Banks (e.g., RBC, TD, Scotiabank newcomer programs).
  - Telecommunications (e.g., Rogers, Telus, Bell).
  - Retail chains (e.g., Walmart, Loblaws, Costco).
- Collaborate with local businesses (e.g., grocery stores, restaurants, ethnic media outlets) to fund culturally relevant sport initiatives.

## Fundraising & Philanthropy

- **Community Fundraising Events:** Organize charity runs, multicultural sports festivals, and other activities to raise funds for sport inclusion.
- Develop an annual giving campaign targeting community members and businesses who support newcomer integration.
- Launch crowdfunding campaigns through GoFundMe, CanadaHelps, or Kickstarter for specific sport inclusion projects.
- Leverage national giving days such as GivingTuesday to drive donations.
- Private Donations: Tap into foundation grants supporting physical activity as a means of social integration.
- Establish a charitable arm to accept tax-deductible donations from individuals and businesses.
- Develop targeted “Adopt-a-Team” or “Sponsor-a-Newcomer” campaigns where donors fund sport access for individuals or teams.

## Cross-Sector Collaboration for Shared Revenue Models

- Partner with NSOs, PSOs, LSOs, and settlement agencies to co-apply for government and philanthropic funding.
- Develop joint funding proposals that align sport with education, health, and social inclusion.
- Form coalitions with banks, community foundations, and local businesses to fund multi-year sport integration programs.
- Collaborate with schools, after-school programs, and libraries to integrate sport into newcomer support services.

By leveraging a mix of government funding, corporate sponsorships, membership fees, fundraising, consultancy, facility rentals, and academic partnerships, intercultural agencies can build sustainable revenue streams to implement the NLTD. Collaboration across sport and settlement sectors will be key to ensuring long-term success and impact.

# Additional Resources to Support New-to-Canada Participants to Engage in Quality Sport and Physical Activity

Many organizations are doing good work by developing resources and sharing information and best practices to support new-to-Canada participants in quality sport and physical activity. Below is a selection of these resources and organizations.

## Sport for Life

Sport for Life is working on programs and resources based on the Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity framework's Awareness and First Involvement stages. These programs offer a platform for physical literacy and quality sport communities to build resources and education to engage new-to-Canada participants.

- **Engaging Those Who Are New to Canada Via Physical Literacy and Quality Sport workshop**  
<https://sportforlife.ca/workshops/>
- **Welcome to Canada: Engaging New to Canada Participants in Sport and Physical Activity eLearning**  
[https://sportforlife-sportpourelavie.ca/catalog\\_detail.php?courseid=1521](https://sportforlife-sportpourelavie.ca/catalog_detail.php?courseid=1521)
- **Sport for Life for EVERY - NEW TO CANADA PARTICIPANT 1.1**  
[https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Sport-for-Life-For-Every-New-to-Canada-Participant-2.0\\_EN\\_FINAL20230726\\_WEB.pdf](https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Sport-for-Life-For-Every-New-to-Canada-Participant-2.0_EN_FINAL20230726_WEB.pdf)
- **Checklist for Newcomer Inclusion**  
[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/7azph8kcaea2pnkcxpi6d/Checklist-for-Inclusion\\_WEB.pdf?rlkey=o21fk2ebemisirefdnym6zssx&e=1&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/7azph8kcaea2pnkcxpi6d/Checklist-for-Inclusion_WEB.pdf?rlkey=o21fk2ebemisirefdnym6zssx&e=1&dl=0)
- **Long-Term Development in Sport and Physical Activity 3.0**  
<https://sportforlife.ca/portfolio-item/long-term-development-in-sport-and-physical-activity-3-0/>
- **Overcoming vs. Dismantling Barriers to Sport and Physical Activity for New to Canada Participants**  
<https://youtu.be/0jJDRSKalL0?si=UPVwtwSQ-UFZrCd>
- **Wellness Through Communication Connection in Greater Victoria: Engaging Newcomers via Physical Activity — Strategic Action Plan 2024/2025**  
<https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Wellness-Community-Strategic-Action-Plan-FINAL-2024-06-07.pdf>
- **Implementing Equitable And Quality Community Sport For Racialized And Newcomer Women And Girls Project**  
<https://sportforlife.ca/blog/case-study-equitable-and-quality-community-sport/>

For more resources and information, visit [sportforlife.ca/nltd](https://sportforlife.ca/nltd) and [sportforlife.ca/new-to-canada-participants](https://sportforlife.ca/new-to-canada-participants).



## Government of Canada

- **2025-2027 Immigration Levels Plan**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2025-2027.html>
- **Local Immigrant Partnerships across Canada**  
<https://lipdata.ca/#>
- **Citizenship & Immigration Glossary of Terms**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship/helpcentre/glossary.html>
- **Learn how the Government of Canada is responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 93 to 94**  
<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524506203836/1557512859985>

## Coaching Association of Canada

- **Voices from the Community: Accessing Sport, Coaching Opportunities and Coach Education**  
[https://coach.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2025-03/voices-from-the-community-reportcac\\_eng\\_final.pdf](https://coach.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2025-03/voices-from-the-community-reportcac_eng_final.pdf)
- **National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) Locker Room**  
<https://coach.ca/new-coaching/about-locker>
- **NCCP Coach Initiation in Sport**  
<https://coach.ca/module/nccp-coach-initiation-sport>

## Canadian Women and Sport

- **Engaging Newcomer Girls & Women: Physical Activity & Sport Handbook**  
<https://womenandsport.ca/engaging-newcomer-girls-women-physical-activity-sport-handbook/>
- **Supporting Newcomer Girls and Women Through Sport Webinar**  
<https://womenandsport.ca/learning-opportunities/webinars/supporting-newcomer-girls-through-sport/>

## Institute of Canadian Citizenship

- **Canoo**  
<https://forcitizenship.ca/canoo/>
- **The Leaky Bucket: A study of Immigrant retention Trends in Canada**  
[https://inclusion.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/print-the-leaky-bucket\\_2023.pdf](https://inclusion.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/print-the-leaky-bucket_2023.pdf)
- **The Newcomer Perspective: Social and Recreational Activities**  
<https://inclusion.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Activities-Survey-Report-1.0.pdf>
- **Playing Together—New Citizens, Sports and Belonging**  
[https://forcitizenship.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/PlayingTogether\\_FullR-Online\\_Final.pdf](https://forcitizenship.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/PlayingTogether_FullR-Online_Final.pdf)

## Canadian Council for Refugees

- **Talking About Refugees and Immigrants: A Glossary Of Terms**

<https://ccrweb.ca/files/static-files/glossary.PDF>

## Newcomer Research Library

- **Empowering new beginnings: A holistic evaluation of a community-developed multi-sports program for new-to-Canada refugee youths and its impact on physical literacy, mental wellbeing and social health**

[https://newcomerresearch.ca/2024/01/01/empowering-new-beginnings-a-holistic-evaluation-of-a-community-developed-multi-sports-program-for-new-to-canada-refugee-youths-and-its-impact-on-physical-literacy-mental-wellbeing-and-social-health/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://newcomerresearch.ca/2024/01/01/empowering-new-beginnings-a-holistic-evaluation-of-a-community-developed-multi-sports-program-for-new-to-canada-refugee-youths-and-its-impact-on-physical-literacy-mental-wellbeing-and-social-health/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

## United Nations

- UN Refugee Agency Sport for Protection toolkit  
<https://www.unhcr.org/media/sport-protection-toolkit>
- UNHCR Sport Strategy—More than just a Game  
<https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-sport-strategy-more-game>
- Leveling the Playing Field: Inspiring Change through Sport  
<https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/leveling-playing-field-inspiring-change-through-sport>
- The Role of Sport in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals  
<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/role-sport-achieving-sustainable-development-goals>



