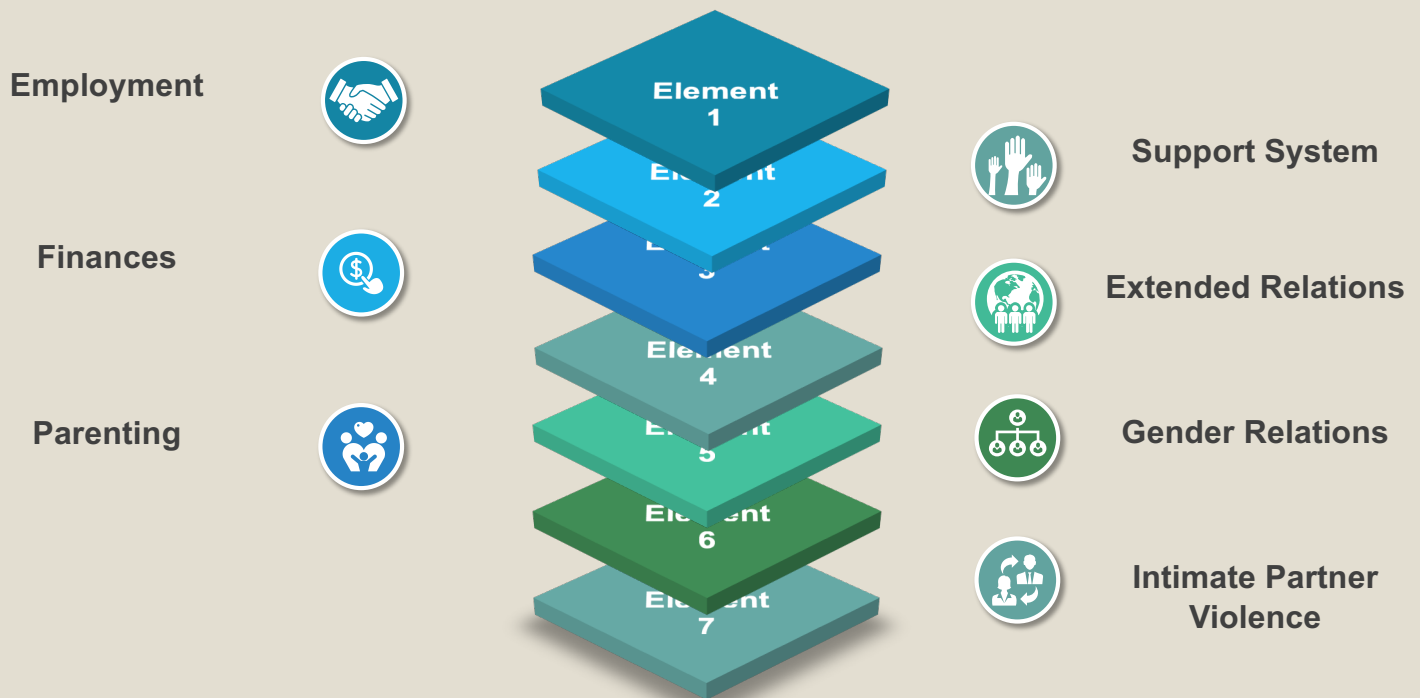


Integration of African Immigrants to Alberta (Challenges and Recommendations)

African immigrants to Alberta are faced with array of challenges during transition and integration into their new home. These challenges are grouped into five main elements below.

Click on each element for a break down of the challenges and recommendations



This information sheet sheds light on three important factors:



African immigrants expect integration to be a two-way process, an effort on their part to adjust to a new environment and an effort on the host society to respond to their needs

01



African immigrants need support to address and navigate systemic barriers, to build a sense of community and identity to pass them onto the next generation

02



African immigrants' remarkable resilience is reflected in how they continually strive to improve their lives, even with the many barriers they face

03

Employment

Common concerns



Canadian employers do not recognize international credentials and require prior Canadian work experience



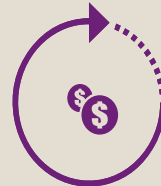
Majority of immigrants end up working in low-skilled, low-wage and insecure jobs



Workplace discrimination



Lack of useful guidelines to help immigrants with finding employment



Settlement agencies encourage new comers to settle for low paying jobs

Recommendations

SSA immigrants should take more time to become familiar with their new host country and the new culture

Enable SSA immigrant organizations to undertake mentorship programs from within

Settlement agencies should provide better guidelines on job prospects and counsel SSA immigrants on how to obtain Canadian credentials

Provide mentorship programs in SSA immigrant communities

Finances

Common concerns

Financially uninformed

Poorly informed financial decision making due to a lack of understanding the financial system in Canada

Two main challenges



Adherence to traditions

Rigid adherence to men's traditional role as breadwinners and the primary decision-makers for the family

Recommendations

It's crucial to educate newcomers on the financial system in Canada and its differences compared to the African financial System. The Government should work with SSA stakeholders to develop learning modules tailored to key elements of Canada's financial system relevant to rebuilding life as newcomers. Key elements such as:

How to build a good credit history

The benefits of joint accounts and family savings, the importance of open communication between partners

The taxing system

Basic banking accounts: Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) and Registered Education Savings Plans (RESP)

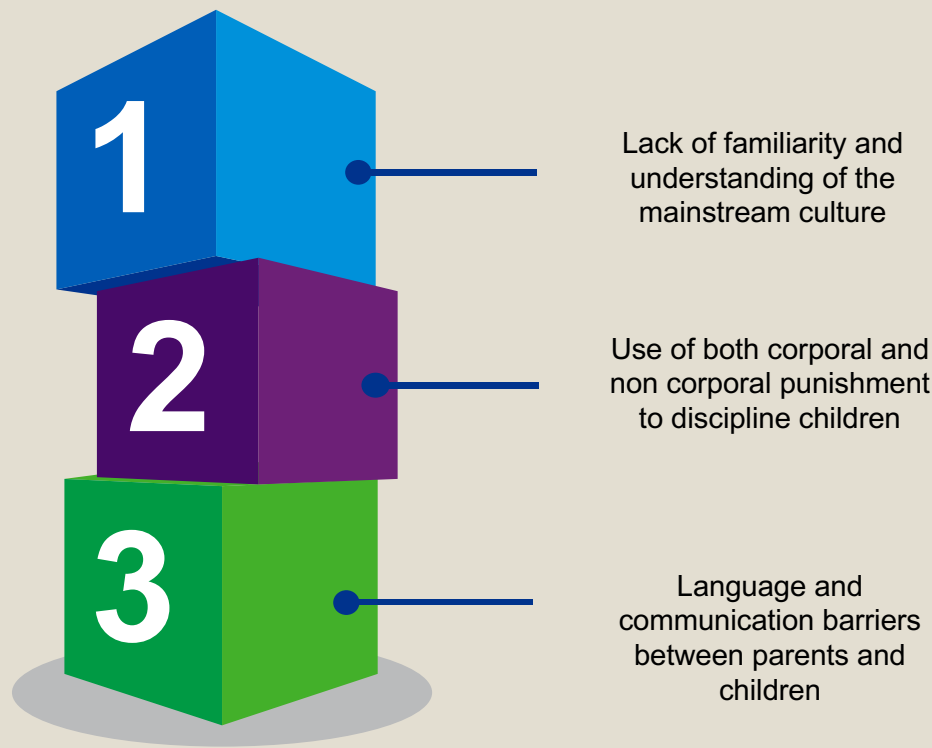
Debit and credit card payments

How to navigate religious beliefs to apply for loans or mortgages

Parenting

Common concerns

African families place great emphasis on developing close and supportive relations with their children. However, parenting is a major concern when integrating between two cultures, due to:



Recommendations



Educate immigrant parents on parenting in the western culture such as the different parenting styles and ways of disciplining



Guide parents on how to better support their children with their educational needs



Encourage parents to become involved with their children's education



Educate parents on finding a work-life balance



Supporting parents to encourage their children to attain a university degree

Support System

Common concerns



Limited use of mainstream service providers and reliance on informal support and religious groups



Lack of awareness to the existence and location of services



Inability to use resources due to: financial difficulties, language barriers, discriminatory practices, fears of negative stereotypes and stigma

Recommendations



01

Educating immigrants about the realities of life in Canada prior to arrival



02

Having proper referral systems and onboarding programs available



03

Ensuring that service providers are familiar with African languages, culture and values



04

Provide services that are accessible and free of cost



05

Seek advice from family and friends in Canada to help navigate the system

Extended Relations

The majority of African immigrants acknowledge the importance of having strong relations with their extended families and feeling responsible to financially support them,

Common concerns

Positive Impact

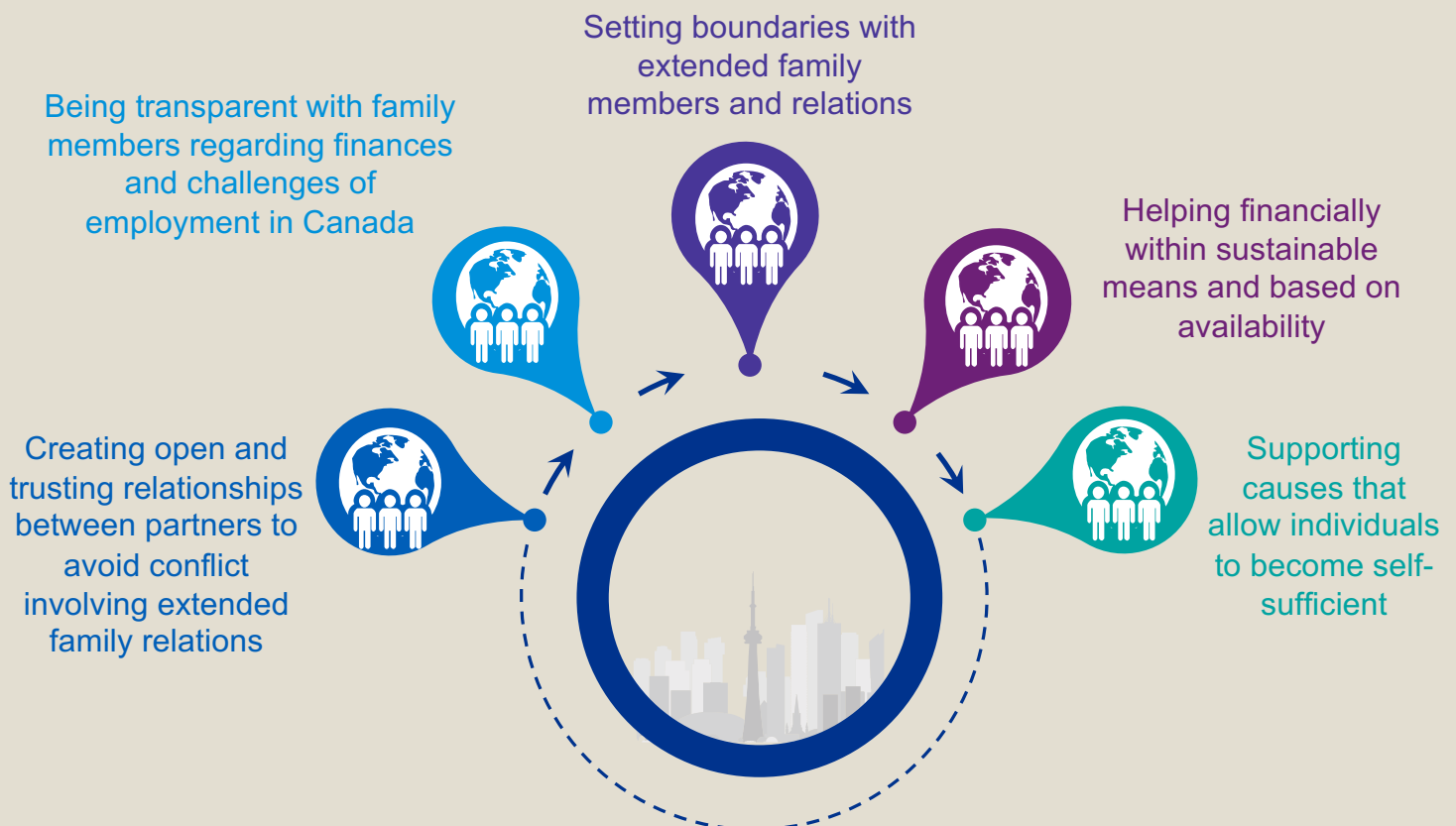
- Encouragement and support

Extended family relations

Negative Impact

- Straining family finances
- Interfering with family relations

Recommendations



Gender Relations

Gender relations is a central element of marriage and family life which interacts with migration and settlement processes. A higher level of tension between partners occur after migration.

Common concerns

Male's view:

- Acknowledge the positive impact of women's empowerment
- Feel that their rights and role are diminished in Canada
- Still maintained traditional beliefs on their patriarchal role as the breadwinner and decision maker in the household

Female's view:

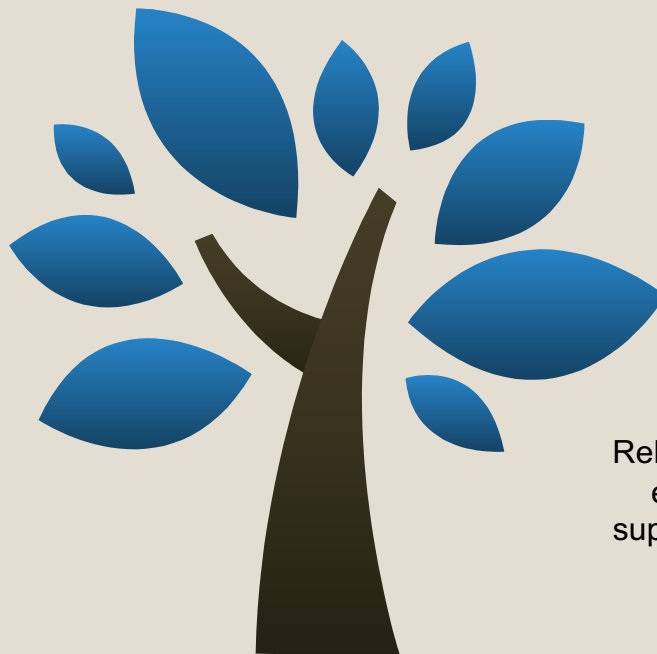
- Acknowledge the need to re-adjust gender roles to meet the needs of their family
- They are more willing to settle for the low paying jobs.

Both:

- Acknowledge the toll that financial stressors, lack of family support, unfamiliarity with the host culture, conflict with their children and limited employment opportunities take on immigrant families

Recommendations

Prepare to live with limited traditional support system, especially for childcare and family chores

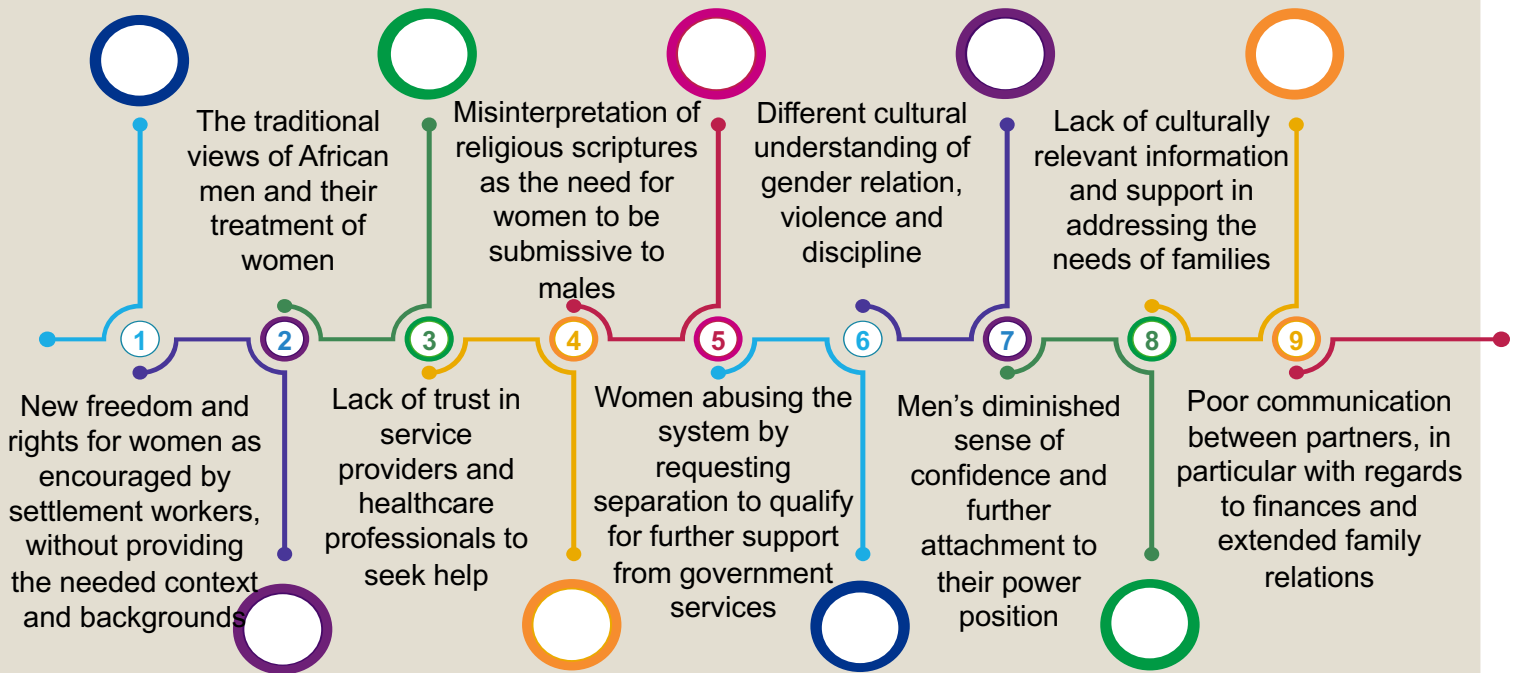


Rebuild relationships with emphasis on mutual support and transparency as core elements

Intimate Partner Violence

The interplay of barriers to settlement, lack of familiar support and the need to adjust to a new culture and its norms can impact gender relations and at times lead to violence.

Common concerns



Recommendations (in the early phases of settlement)

