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**Building Home in Immigrant Integration and Inclusion Policies  
and Initiatives  
Kelly Ryan and Heather Salfrank Joseph**

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## **Building Home in Immigrant Integration and Inclusion Policies and Initiatives**

**Kelly Ryan and Heather Salfrank Joseph**

### **HRF Presentation Summary**

*Kelly Ryan contends that all immigration is local, in that strong local community support and interpersonal connections are key to successful immigrant integration and inclusion. The question is how can governments and policies foster the environments needed for these connections and local support systems. Disassociation and isolation are the major risks of failing to make these connections, and this impacts not only migrant experience but also that of the receiving community. The sense of displacement remains even the immediate context is physically secure. The narrative of migration tends to focus on forced migration and vulnerabilities rather than the wider stories of displacement and the strengths and skills of migrants.*

*The priority is to build a shared sense of social benefit – a “we” culture rather than “them and us.” Full civic participation in American life is known to be key to successful integration. The state cannot regulate human choices but it can ensure that participation is accessible and rewarding. A whole government approach is needed and a good place to start would be an inclusion review such as those conducted by the OECD and outlining a two-way compact between the responsibilities of arriving migrants and those of the receiving communities. The American model of “sink or swim” works best if there can be some swimming lessons – especially in terms of acquiring language skills to engage at every level within the receiving community. Essential services can be provided by state agencies but neighbourliness is also essential to integration and the opportunity to share a meal and the principles of freedom and American values needed to feel truly at home.*

\*Full paper is being prepared for publication. Further details to be announced.