

North West Scarborough Local Immigration Partnership

Partnership Council Meeting #5 - Minutes

Location: CICS – 2330 Midland Ave.

Date: November 11th, 2010

Time: 1:00pm – 4:00pm

Attendees: Yoga Arulsubramanian (TESOC), Mei Tin Lee (CICS), Helen Yang (YMCA NIC), Connie Leung (CICS), Justine Barone (Elizabeth Fry), Bona Chen (Newcomer Resident), Waheeda Rahman (The Scarborough Hospital), Hanna Cabaj (TCDSB), Suzanne Decary (CNIB), Karen Evans (TDSB), Jorge Silvestri (MNLCT), Biruntha Sriharan (EMYS), Sheeba Narikuhzy (EMYS), Helenna Huang (ACCES), Hakima Yusufi (AAO), Gael Gilbert (ACSA), Stephanie Yin (Aisling Discoveries), Mani Mahadeva (NWS LIP), Rezwan Karim (NWS LIP), Michelle Davis (NWS LIP), Lucy Ren (NWS LIP), Cyleta Sealy-Gibson (NWS LIP), Muneer Ahmed Jar (NWS LIP), Sri Thangarajah (NWS LIP)

1. Welcome – Overview of the Project Process & Timeline Thus Far

Gael addresses the Partnership Council with the mandate of the LIP:

- We need to stress that the LIP strategies are holistic in nature and must address the needs of the people we serve, be innovative and have longevity
- It is the responsibility of the entire LIP council to identify and partner in creating solutions to enhance newcomers' lives
- The Strategy is a platform to communicate with all influential members – e.g. government, policy makers, funders, newcomers, the for profit and nonprofit sectors, and the entire community - the more diverse the better
- NWS LIP needs to be more innovative in its solutions and recommendations and act as pioneers
- Stakeholders are still missing from Partnership Council – e.g. Business and health sector
- It is the responsibility of the Partnership Council to engage new stakeholders and forge partnerships among council members
- More promotion of collaboration among Partnership Council organizations and agencies in critical – e.g. Fund sharing

- Hesitation has been exhibited in the past but the need to get past the fear is detrimental to serving our clients
- The LIP requires the commitment of Partnership Council to act as stewards for change, within their own organizations and otherwise
- Need to push for long term sustainability of the NWS LIP to be incorporated in our Implementation Plan

2. Managing Change in System and Practice

Case Study shared by Mani (refer to PowerPoint slide Traditional Approach vs. Advocacy)
This case study is about the impact of advocacy on post-disaster organizational capacity development project implemented by United Nations in Sri Lanka during 2005 to 2009.

Rezwan shares a “Newcomer Story” to delve into gaps that exist within the sector as a whole in Toronto and to engage participants to come up with possible improvements and best practices

Participants share their feedback:

- Language barrier is one of the challenges for newcomers to obtain necessary services
- Staffs at Hospitals need to be trained to serve effectively patients from diverse cultural and religious background
- Newcomers need interpretation services
- Information of and changes in the services should be communicated to newcomers extensively
- Not necessarily weakness of the health system, but that of practices of individuals that lead to disappointment for a newcomer family

3. Working Groups and Review Missing Links

Mani presents the High Demand Services:

1. Employment and Labour Market information
2. Language Training and Education
3. General Health Care
4. Housing and basic needs
5. Mental Health Services
6. Recreation Programs

Missing Links

- Food security and accessibility
- Language interpretation services
- Wellness services & support for baby boomers
- Environmental adaptation
- Language training in work place
- Support services and safe spaces for LGBTQ newcomers
- Mental Health and cultural accessibility
- Community Safety
- Caregivers(grandparents and children) support services

Additional Missing Links added by participants:

1. Transportation services (Public Education) / Transportation Orientation
2. Financial system - banking, credit, mortgage
3. Newcomer Homelessness
4. Newcomers in the Penal System(Criminal Justice system)
5. Newcomers with Disabilities

The participants answer questions in regards to the selected four “Missing Links” in groups:

Environmental Adaptation

- What are the programs that currently exist to support environmental adaptation?
- What programs, services and tools can we introduce to enhance our current support services?
- What do we have to begin address to these enhancements?
- What do we need to continue to providing this support?

Responses:

- City Recycling Program and promotion of environmental initiatives, community gardens, Earth day, TCEL which promotes environmental awareness, companies that promote and advocate environmental responsibility, cyclist program, education on solar energy, etc.
- Provide an educational piece within settlement that introduces newcomers to environmental issues and ways to be more responsible

Food security and Accessibility

- What kind of food security programs currently exist?
- What are the diverse needs around ‘food security’ for different ethnic groups?
- What can we do to improve food security?
- How might our member agencies support the food security programs that we have?

Responses:

- Food banks/ security free breakfast and meals on wheels programs
- Halal food, vegetarian and any other dietary specific options for food support recipients

- Better food inspection, visible and legible labels in various languages, provide brochures that promote healthy eating practices
- Provide translation in food serving programs, educate newcomers on how and where to attain food supports, promote and provide more diverse and cultural foods, provide the skills needed to cultivate and properly prepare healthy food to encourage a better lifestyle, promote eating homemade meals and its importance in saving money, utilize backyard and other land areas available in Scarborough to promote community gardening, home base productions, support cooking clubs, etc.

Language Interpretation/ Translation Services

- How does this service work now?
- What potential resources do we have?
- How can we utilize those resources to improve the service?
- What can member agencies do to support?

Responses:

- Settlement agencies can hire more multilingual staff and professional interpreters
Volunteer agencies and translators
- Use volunteers, gather community information, or obtain certified translators / interpreters to work in different sectors
- Provide a list of agencies with the languages they speak and have material in varying languages

Mental Health and Cultural Accessibility

- How is mental health perceived by newcomer adults, seniors, youth and children?
- What mental health programs and services are available for our clients?
- What barriers to mental health do our clients have in accessing these services?
- How can we better frame or reframe services so that mental health is accessible and culturally sensitive?
- How can we begin to respond to the barriers to mental health?
- Who do we need to strategically engage to increase our capacity to support the mental health needs of our clients? (list monetary and NON monetary)

Responses:

- Taboo, invisible, culturally sensitive
- Educational material provided by hospitals, day programs for people with mental health issues, counseling programs, coping programs, group homes
- Barriers with language and cultural sensitivity, lack of proper information and accessibility, transportation, people not understanding or recognizing this as an illness, need for staff that can culturally relate to patients, etc.
- Educate the public towards acceptance and engaging individuals with mental health illnesses, as well as involving the families to understanding the depths of their loved ones illness and how they can be of better support

4. Review the Strategies and Priorities

Mani reviews the 22 Strategies and participants were asked to rank them according to the duration required to implement (long/short term), priority needs of newcomers (low, medium, high) and difficulty levels in implementation (easy, moderate, hard).

5. Presenting the Data

Mani presents the results: (please see the attached Strategy Rankings)

Ice Breaker

The participants complete an ice breaker that challenges their creativity to solve a logic puzzle. The point of the exercise is to show that there are many ways to approach any task in life, and that the most logical method is not always the best suited. It takes many approaches not always the most conventional, but innovation and diversity to achieve success. That is how the NWS LIP would like to operate in its future plans.

6. Sector Specific Group Discussions

Mani has the participants break out into their respective Cluster working groups to do the following:

- Select a Chair Person for their Cluster
- Select their first Cluster meeting date & venue
- Review draft strategies / Fine tune the strategies (add, change etc.)
- Look for activities to implement and achieve envisaged results.
- Identify resource requirements and organizations to be involved
- Identify proposed next steps

Feedback:

- Participants concluded that Cluster Chair persons will be decided at the first Cluster meetings
- Cluster meetings were confirmed for Clusters 1,2,3
- Due to time constraints in the meeting, the three remaining points will be discussed in the first Cluster meetings

Unfortunately we did not receive feedback for Clusters 4 & 5 due to a lack of participants present at this meeting

7. Closing – Next Meetings

Cluster 1: Education, Training and Employment – November 25th, 2:00pm to 4:00pm @ Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto, Unit A/B - 2600 Birchmount Road

Cluster 2: Settlement Cluster – November 23rd, 9:30am to 11:30am @ Elizabeth Fry, 525 Markham Road

Cluster 3: Health and Wellness Cluster – November 19th, 2:00pm to 4:00pm @ CICS, 2330 Midland Avenue

*Clusters 4 & 5 will be notified of their meetings once consolidated

Next Partnership Council Meeting - January 18th 2011, Venue TBA

*Steering Committee date and venue TBA