

Steeles/L'Amoreaux Local Immigration Partnership

Partnership Council Planning Session #3 – Meeting Minutes

Location: Highbrook Learning Centre - 39 Highbrook Drive, Scarborough, ON

Date: April 16th, 2010 from 9am -12pm

Attendees: Monika Payseur (CIC), Rezwan Karim (S/L'Am LIP), Mei Tin Lee (CICS), Alice Mui (Carefirst), Anne Crasto (WHCS), Sulekha Sathi (Agincourt Library), Timothy Chan (S/L'Am Resident), Cynthia du Mont (WSNCC), Adair Heath (City of Toronto), Lucy Ren (S/L'Am LIP), Gurprit Matharu (SSSC), Helen Yang (YMCA), Freba Shamsamand (MCI), Jorge Silvestri (MNLCT), Malsan Grananendran (ANC Glendower), Augustine Jeevanathan (S/L'Am LIP), Rabindra Sabat (SAFSS), Cyletha Gibson-Sealy (S/L'Am LIP), Mani Mahadeva (S/L'Am LIP), Karen Evans (TDSB), Tawanda Chirenda (Eglinton/Kennedy East LIP), Othniel Litchmore (Eglinton/Kennedy East LIP), Michelle Allen (ACCESS Employment), Grainne O'Donnell (TDSB), Glen Gifford (SHHC)

Minutes

1. Recap the Summit – Highlights

Mani introduces Danny Nashman and Joanna Mackie

Participants introduce themselves

Danny gives briefing on the Community Summit

- Who Was There (38 people)
- Agencies and Service Providers
- Local Residents / Newcomers to Canada

What We Did:

- Explored Stories and Ideas from the Interviews
- Created a Vision for the Future – What Would an Ideal Experience Look Like
- Identified High Level Themes to Explore in Our Settlement Strategy

2. Review Outputs and Themes

Joanna goes over themes found from Stakeholder interviews

- Make the Immigration Process- Easier, Faster (Shorten Wait Times for Reunions)
- Integrate Settlement Services
 - One Stop Shopping / All the services available in one place / Fewer referrals

- Think about settlement like a curriculum – provide the right information at the right time tailored to the need of the newcomer
- Ensure newcomers are involved in defining services – ex. Resume writing not useful to all
- More support to enable the community help one another
- Improve Access to Information – Help newcomers find the info they need at the right place and time
- Ensure services are available at point of need – some mobile services, coordination among the service providers
- Assessing credentials – improve the system – building awareness
- Agencies – share info, improve service – this is important
- Employment – better connections with business, employers, mentorship, placement, internship
- Access to Education (post secondary) – making it more accessible
- Support to families – parenting, seniors support
- Affordable Housing
- Focus on Basic Service & Quality of life services

Joanna goes over what Newcomers see as “ideal” situation and Danny gives hand-out

Ideas for Pre-arrival, Arrival and Post arrival

Pre Arrival

- Pre-arrival package – a picture of life in Canada
- Canadian embassies conduct orientation session
- Credential Assessments for trained professional
- Distribute qualified immigrants according to professional background to appropriate city (not after they are settled in Toronto)

Arrival

- Welcome team greets at the airport with someone who speaks ...“you are not alone”
- Newcomer Settlement Agency Desk - agencies at airport and leave contact info – websites (in different languages), yellow pages etc. – for specific information
- Settlement agencies follow up with them to refer them to local community
- Agency representative speaks to one-stop shopping services available – gives contact card
- Explaining Canadian customs “we’ll help you get the hang of it”
- All services are there for newcomer when they arrive – including transportation
- Residents take newcomer to market and all other local services
- Community Hub – health services and many others
- Within first week they are going to Civic Centre – settlement helpdesk here – application for SIN – here they get the information package about the Scarborough area – include audio and video materials too

Post Arrival

- Post-arrival follow up - 3 months later – Interview to find out how she is doing – employment, finding info you're looking for, checking on immigration representatives, leaves contact number
- Pair a resident with newcomers so they can ask questions, get support etc. – shopping, banking, housing etc.
- Customized action planning for them to set their goals
- Home visits by community members / Intensify the mentorship programs that truly meet the needs of the newcomers – has to be well matched
- More government grants to support education, affordable housing
- Incentives for employers so they're encouraged to hire newcomers
- Welcome centre in every district – to get all info from that centre – not necessarily all the services, but the one-stop shopping with all info
- Don't forget services for newcomers business owners - Immigrants that are starting businesses – how to support them

3. Define Areas for Innovation and Action (Based Upon Community Input)

Danny goes over Areas for Innovation & Action

Consider alignment with Government vision and recommendations for government:

1. Improving the Initial Welcome and Information Gathering Process

- Community Welcome Centre and Package
 - Services at airport – referral to welcome centre/settlement services in their area
 - Newcomers and agencies to connect early/newcomer leaves airport with info re: where to go
- Arrival comprehensive package – what's in it and when the newcomer gets it
- Finding ways to follow-up with newcomers after a few months
- Pre-arrival advice to CIC – how much energy to put into this? Make recommendations

2. Enabling the Community to Play a Valuable and Coordinated Role in Settlement

- Community support – how to design this program e.g. buddying, mentoring
- Clarifying what the community does (relative to government and agency work)
- Neighborhood gatherings

3. Making Services and Support More Effective

- Customizing the Support and Services Provided + Continuum of service to serve multiplicity of needs
- Building capacity in all those who touch new comers to better assess needs and provide appropriate coaching guidance and advice
- Enhancing programs (JSW, LINC, Employment etc.) so that they better meet the diverse needs of newcomers

- To adopt a model based on coordination of services and where appropriate integration

Discussions at each individual table on handouts

Feedback:

- Adair suggested making a change to the third point from “Customizing the Support & Services Provided” to “Making Services & Support More Effective”
- Jorge suggested having a direct contact line for services right from the airport
- Alice suggested government alignments with service providers and exchange information
- Rabindra stressed that pre-arrival will be very important, though LIP is not in control of that aspect it is still a priority
- Jorge says that we should make recommendations to CIC
- Michelle suggested that airports are the ideal starting point; but we will need more support from CIC, to get services directly to newcomers
- Mani suggests that at civic centre could be another point of interaction
- Cynthia suggests that a continuum of services be stressed, e.g. strong support systems and networks

Danny discuss’ delving further into the 3 points “buckets” for each Cluster to be reconfigured into to answer each point

Joanna suggests that inter-weaving each sub-group (ex. Educ., training, health & wellness, etc.)

Danny suggests that each participant decide which of the 3 points they would like to join to create Focus Area Teams

Feedback:

- Anne suggested that each point be clearly defined
- Adair suggested that we note who is missing (ex. Housing, health, residents, etc.)

Participants converge into groups based on the 3 points

4. Review Proposed Role of Clusters

Participants discuss why they chose the table they are at and their area of expertise, and who should be at the their table

Team 1

Jorge Silvestri, Sulekha Sathi

Team 2

Malsan Grananendran, Glen Gifford, Grainne O'Donnell

Team 3

Adair Heath, Cynthia du Mont, Mei Tin Lee, Anne Crasto, Michelle Allen, Karen Evans, Alice Mui, Gurprit Matharu, Rabindra Sabat, Helen Yang

After groups were formed they discussed what other people or perspectives that needs to be present in their particular Focus Team

Feedback:

Team 1

- CIC
- Boarder control
- Airport officer
- Community members (residents, faith and cultural leaders/ groups)

Team 2

- Police
- Toronto community housing
- Toronto public health
- Faith based
- Toronto public library
- More residents and newcomers
- Businesses/employers
- Grassroots organizations

Team 3

- Scarborough Housing Help Centre
- Public Health
- Catholic Cross Cultural
- Operation Springboard
- Parks, Forestry, & Recreation
- Libraries
- TCHC
- ACSA

Danny goes over what will be the focus of each group for the remaining portion of the LIP project

- Today and April Meeting
 - Reaffirming Desired Outcomes from the Process
 - Defining the Research Questions and Process
- Focus Area Team Meeting 3 (May)
 - Reviewing research learning (done by LIP team and Cluster members)
 - Creating initial recommendations
 - Identifying Additional Questions that Need Exploring

- Focus Area Team Meeting 4 (June)
 - Consolidating recommendations
 - Develop draft strategy

5. Meet in Clusters to Create a Plan

Danny calls for participants to discuss in their focus groups the “Team Conversations” (see slide #19)

Feedback:

Team 1

- Look at what’s in welcome package – how to organize – ensure its reviewed regularly + card for one contact for newcomer
- Cultural sensitivity, language (is it clear?), translations etc
- Where would they get the packages from?
- Include Canada border services, foreign affairs + local community groups as we focus on this neighbourhood
- Customizing to include neighbourhood specific info
- Formal and informal networks – resident groups at our table too
- Want OCASI + Ontario immigration at the table

Team 2

- Outcomes – more united community with understanding of richness and diversity of community (involve entire community not just newcomers, framework for community diversity, bottom-up leadership, ownership)
- What we know about what exists
- Ideal approach – bringing tentacles together, a variety of approaches to get people to come together
- Important to narrow our focus
- Answer “why should we do this?”

Team 3

- Three models of one stop shopping – referral/expert who can refer, co-location, case management model (first agency shepherds newcomer through the system)
- Info sharing ideas e.g. list of services for newcomers
- Importance of educating each other – political network of service organizations + virtual network
- Look at diff phases of settlement services
- Service integration
- Need for services in our neighbourhoods – partner with libraries etc.
- Discussions with ministries to support a streamlined process

6. Next Steps

Established Steering Committee Members

Team 1

Sulekha & Jorge

Team 2

Glen & resident (TBA)

Team 3

Adair & Mei Tin

7. Next Focus Group Meetings

Team 1

Last Tuesday's, alternating time every month

First meeting will be April 27th @ Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto - 2600 Birchmount Road - Unit A/B, 9:30am - 11:30am

Team 2

Last Monday's of every month

First meeting will be 26th @ ANC Glendower - 331 Glendower Circuit - Unit #6, 9:30am - 11:30am

Team 3

Last Thursday's of every month

First meeting will be April 29th, @ CICS 2330 Midland Ave., 9:30am - 11:30am

8. Meeting Ends