

Steeles/L'Amoreaux Local Immigration Partnership

Steering Committee Meeting – Minutes May 11th, 2010

Location: ACSA, 4155 Sheppard Ave. E

Time: 9:30am – 11:30am

Attendees: **Team 1** - Jorge Silvestri (MNLCT), Helen Yang (YMCA, NIC), **Team 2** - Glen Gifford (SHHC), **Team 3** - Adair Heath (City of Toronto), Mei Tin Lee (CICS), **Lead Agency** - Lee Soda (ACSA), **Project Management Team** - Mani Mahadeva (S/L'Am LIP), Rezwanul Karim (S/L'Am LIP), Michelle Davis (S/L'Am LIP)

1. Welcome

Mani begins meeting and each member introduces themselves

Lee Soda will be Chairing the meeting today

2. Briefing of CIC Discussions

- CIC will be extending project up to 6 months (till March 2011), but we have to start negotiating in time and need to be justified with a submission of a work plan and budget.

Some of the reasons we could address:

- Project started in December 2009 and Key activities by the Council started during first week of February 2010.
- During the first planning meeting members recommended doing community consultation which took two months. Our Council came up with clear vision and project direct in April 2010 after reviewing and analysing ground situation.
- Draft paper to be ready by July 2010, with skeletal outline of what is to be discussed in the Strategic paper for October 2010. Though there is a possibility for 6 months extension, we have to work towards submitting an LIP Strategic Proposal in October 2010. Negotiations with CIC need to be started early for the extension.
- LIP Strategic plan would be one of the major criteria to fund future project proposals submitted by service agencies within the Steeles/ L'Amoreaux area
- CIC will not compare our LIP to other existing or outside LIP's
- CIC asks that the council look at other means of funding for future projects and collaborations where effective services could be provided at lower cost.
- LIP project may get extension beyond March 2011.

3. Steering Committee members brief all participants on their Team meeting

Jorge Silvestri from Team 1:

- Focus areas: Pre-arrival, arrival, post-arrival packages and welcoming newcomers
- Discussed the gaps in delivering information to people at these stages
- One of the tasks would be to submit recommendations to CIC for improvements to welcome package
- Agreed that this will be a very large area to tackle. However, Team 1 may not spend more time on deep analysis of pre-arrival and arrival packages. It will review the packages and make general recommendations.
- Information to newcomers to be tailor-made not a broad range of various information that may be overwhelming.
- Community to play a key role in settlement upon arrival. Team 1 discussed using existing neighbourhood welcoming centres such as CICS & YMCA and the possibility of establishing welcoming centres at libraries. Team 1 will also discuss establishing welcoming centers at other service providers' offices and community centres.
- Capacity building is one of the key requirements to make the community capable of providing the initial welcome to the newcomers.

Group Feedback

Mei Tin: There will be a need to get in touch with IRIS who collects information for newcomers, very important resource

- IRIS involved in producing welcome package to all newcomers regardless of what their here for

Adair: Concerned that reviewing the welcome package will be a task that is bigger than what we are capable of doing

- LIP will not spend lot of time in doing specific ground work to make area specific recommendations for pre-arrival and arrival packages, but make general recommendations after reviewing existing information on the pre-arrival and arrival services and literature. Team 1 may spend more time on reviewing post arrival information package and welcoming during post-arrival stage and identify areas to improve.

Adair: Is there an agency that is in contact with CIC that is already doing this type of work?

- *IMPACS* did a study in 2002 to create an improved communication plan for the settlement of newcomers (**Promoting Settlement Programs in Toronto: A Communication Plan, Settlement Directorate Ontario Region (SDOR) /Prepared by IMPACS Communications Centre, Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, March 2003**)

Glen Gifford Team 2:

- Geographic area of S/L'Am LIP was discussed and a resident was brought on board
- Discussion to gather more stakeholders from the community
- Capacity building of the community groups to assist in settlement in newcomers
- Service providers will benefit from using community members and gain trust and recognition.
- Use newcomers that have been here longer as an untapped resource of peer mentoring.
- Team 2 suggested that LIP has to study how resident groups and faith-based groups currently help newcomers and identify the potential and training needs. Settlement services have to extend their support to training community groups.

Group Feedback

- LIP has started focus group discussions with the community to identify what kinds of support community groups provide to newcomers and how the LIP project can use their potential.
- Some Churches have been supporting newcomers (both refugees and PR holders) to initiate their life in this neighbourhood and they mostly work independently
- LIP will also conduct focus group discussions with resident community groups

Jorge: Role of the community needs to be more active

Helen: Work on inviting employers to help newcomers more

Glen: Be cautious of employers with their own agendas, but invite only those genuinely wanting to help newcomers not to take advantage of cheap labour

Glen: Capture the negative aspects to learn from them

- Group shares their stories of traps for newcomers and how to disseminate that information to newcomers. It was suggested that community groups can give such awareness to newcomers.
- These issues need to be further delved into to get this information to service providers and thus get that to their clients
- This needs to be in the project recommendations also

Adair: Devise a mechanism that will help people share their negative experiences with various service providers and agencies

Glen: Team 2 can delve into that and make recommendations

Adair and Mei Tin Team 3:

- Looked at what the other teams were doing
- Talked about referrals
- Discussed the deadline for interim strategy paper
- Recommended missing stakeholders
- Members were asked to do a self assessment of their services and to be done before May 15, 2010.
- Clarification with the roles of the members
- Certain members in this Team feel there is so much information to delve into, are still not clear, and confused as to the focus areas of the Team
- Missing stakeholders, no labour market or various service providers

Group Feedback

- Partnership profiles have been shared
- Roles defined, strategic plan, type of partnerships, recommendations, will be proposed to CIC for S/L'Am LIP
- CIC will use our strategic paper as a tool to review the future project proposals submitted by not-for profit organizations. They may not fund the components in that project proposal which do not match with the strategy proposed by the LIP Partnership Council.

5. Open Discussion & Set Targets

Jorge: There is no need to wait until July to tell CIC that we will need an extension

Adair: Concerned that there will not be enough time to complete a thorough analysis

Glen: Would like to know if there is a schedule that details the deadlines to CIC

Adair: Suggests that there needs to be more service providers that are actually located in S/L'Am area involved in the LIP

Jorge: CIC should not put such weight on funding of other programs based on the LIP Strategy Plan

Steering committee decided to produce structure of the strategy paper in June 2010

- Draft strategy paper in July 2010
- Put our effort to produce the strategy paper in Sep/ Oct 2010

6. Next Steps

Next Steering Committee meeting June 1st, 2010, 2:00pm – 4:00pm at ACSA