

# Steeles/L'Amoreaux Local Immigration Partnership

## Improving the Initial Welcome and Information Gathering Process -

### Meeting Minutes April 27<sup>th</sup> 2010

**Location:** Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto - Unit A/B - 2600 Birchmount Rd.

**Time:** 9:30am – 11:30am

**Attendees:** Lucy Ren (S/L'Am LIP), Hanna Cabaj (TCDSB), Helen Yang (YMCA), Jorge Silvestri (MNLCT), Sulekha Sathi (Agincourt Library), Yoga Arulsubramanian (TESOC), Mani Mahadeva (S/L'Am LIP), Michelle Davis (S/L'Am LIP)

#### 1. Welcome & Introduction

Mani does a brief introduction and review of the agenda  
Briefing of what was discussed in Team 2's meeting  
Chair for today's meeting is Jorge

#### 2. Name Change of Team

Proposed names:

- Welcoming & Access to Information
- Welcoming & Information Gathering
- Welcoming & Accessing Information
  
- **Welcome & Access to Information** - Final name

#### 3. Revisit the "Focus Areas"

Project manager explains the process of linking the three Teams and requested to keep that in mind and the overall project outcomes, and review the focus areas.

- Pre-arrival - Review existing information (online) and explore the possibility for Canadian High Commission to provide information package to immigrants before arrival – re: credential assessment, bridging program, resume, job market research
  - Recommend to CIC where they need to improve/reconstruct - map website – available for those that want to know and be pro-active
- Arrival - Review and recommend arrival welcoming package
  - Review the welcoming package in order to give new arrivals pre-information on what is available to them
  - Information desk at airport – referral to welcome centre/settlement services in the area newcomer will settle
  - Information desk at Civic Centre
- Post- Arrival - Community Welcome Centre
  - Review ongoing care or settlement support of newcomers and communities

- Make use of existing welcome centers – YMCA, CICS, ACSA
  - Information provided in different languages
  - Community welcome the newcomers and provide relevant and correct information
  - Orient the neighbourhood – community tour / virtual tour (Public Libraries)
  - Newcomers and agencies to connect early - referral by residents
  - Orientation of education system and institutes – college tour, awareness (YMCA)
- Get different agencies involved in establishing welcome centres, staffing, volunteers, cost for multilingual printing (Pre-arrival and upon arrival : - CIC, Welcome centers)
  - Finding ways to follow-up with newcomers after a few weeks – residents/ settlement services
  - How do we evaluate the outcome of the initiatives? – create space for constructive feedback from newcomers

### **Proposed Approaches:**

- Contact at the airport will give general information on where the newcomer will be settling – provide a direct contact to services/ welcome centres in a neighbourhood
- Facilities to do language benchmark assessment before arrival by comparing IELTS results with additional information? E g.: Benchmark scores required for different professional jobs, and what is required to meet those standards (e.g. improve language skills, get credential assessment before arrival)
- Newcomers very rarely come on their own to seek help from service providers, usually come with a relative or friend – use resources like grass-roots organizations and family to reach the newcomers
- Outreach to make sure that people are aware of the services overall
- Welcome centres – use existing places such as YMCA, CICS, ACSA:
  - establish centres at Public libraries, other settlement service centres, faith based groups and grass-roots associations
- Settlement through community engagement will take care of post-arrival
- Improved services and support will take care of long-term
- Training for front-line staff and grass-roots organizations to educate them on the issues of newcomers and how to refer them to the necessary service providers
- Develop a website with an interactive map coded to show what services are available in a particular area where services providers and agencies are responsible for keeping their information up-to-date
- Could have a website or DVD to give in place of a physical welcome package

### **Some key concerns**

- Combating issues of isolation (seniors) upon arrival
- As service providers are unaware of what others have to offer, LIP partnerships propose to share information about different services provided by all the stakeholders in North West Scarborough - as information constantly changes, ongoing training of staff is required
- Many newcomers have not heard of Settlement.org or CIC – more promotion is needed to make such entities more notable and recognizable
- CIC's website has so much information it may look overwhelming
- Keep physical welcome package for those that may not have access to the internet or are not computer literate

## 5. Other Matters

Jorge Silvestri has prepared an information display (extracted from CIC website)

He briefed participants as to his observations to the Team members:

- Review of Pre-Arrival Package:
- Cost of Living in Canada
- Choosing a City
- Finding Newcomer Services in your Area
- Learning English & French
- Bringing Goods to Canada
- Crossing the Border
- Policing in Canada
- Laws Maintain Order
- Checklist (should be the first item\*)
- Interviewing Process (at the airport)

Missing Information and Recommendations:

- Credential assessment and job finding information (professionals, skilled workers)

## 6. Other Stakeholders to be connected

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

## 7. Next Steps

Team 1 has to address one or more overall project outcome(s). Overall project outcomes are:

- *To improve access to and coordination of immigrant integration services (Education, Language training, Employment, settlement and labour market integration)*
- *To improve labour market outcomes for immigrants. This may include initiatives such as engagement of local employers, mentorship initiatives, coordination of local employment services and non-paid internships*
- *To strengthened local awareness and capacity to successfully integrate immigrants*

Intention or vision of this team would be:

- Newcomer-friendly information package (language/ precise / need based)
- Newcomers feel welcomed by the community (residents proactive/ rapport building)
- Newcomers have better access to right information (three different points – Airport/ Civic Centre, welcome centres (e.g.: welcome centres at Libraries/ schools), Community groups

To be discussed:

- Developing number of outputs for the proposed key activities:  
e.g. - Developing an information package to be issued at Civic center

Then Team 1 has to produce answers to the following:

- How are we going to achieve the goals (how to execute - process/activity)?
- Whom do we have to consult and how?
- Existing resources and required resources
- Expected Output & How do we measure the impact?
- Required funding (staff, equipments, space, time)

Team members expected to come up with a number of outcomes and answers to the above questions for each outcome.

### **8. Next Meeting**

**May 25<sup>th</sup> 2010, 10:00am -12:00pm, YMCA - 10 Milner Business Court – 6<sup>th</sup> Floor**

- **Paid parking is available**