

North West Scarborough Local Immigration Partnership

Working Committee #2: Employment, Education & Training

Meeting Minutes

Date: May 17, 2011

Location: Highbrook Learning Centre, 39 Highbrook Drive, Scarborough

Attendees: Karen Evans (TDSB), Helenna Huang (ACCES Employment), Jorge Silvestri (Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto), Neelu Nagi (Toronto Employment and Social Services), Yoga Arulsubramaniam (TESOC), Hanna Cabaj (TCDSB), Mhalakshmi Samiappan (Resident), Charisma Juneja (Resident), Tom Zizys (consultant), Mani Mahadeva (NWS LIP), Rezwan Karim (NWS LIP)

Introduction and Objective of the meeting

- Rezwan welcomes the participants and requests for a self introduction
- Mani explains the objective of the meeting that the consultant will discuss with the committee members about client profile of employment agencies in North West Scarborough and some other demographics in order to get inputs from the committee members to help the council to achieve key outcomes set under the employment strategy. Consultant will specially focus on identifying selected employers and business associations to help building relationship with them to improve the placement and mentorship opportunity for newcomer clients.

Discussion on the questionnaire

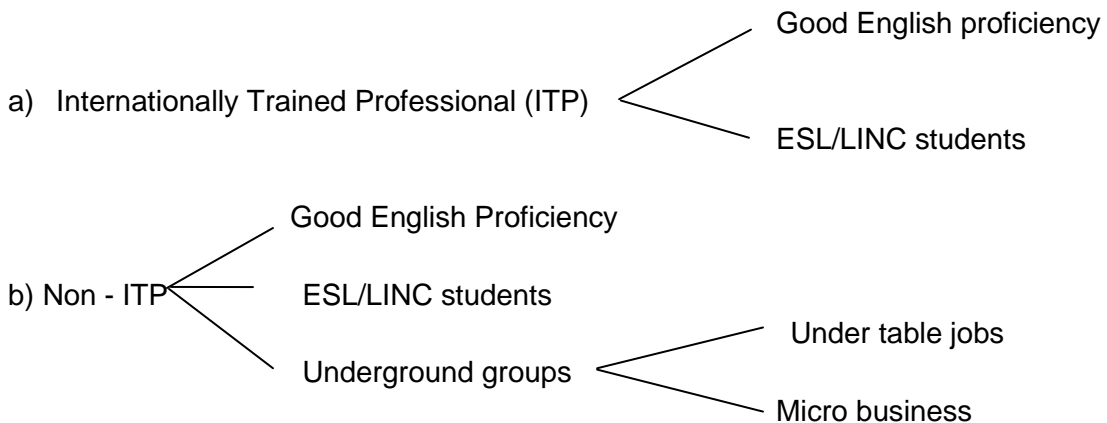
- Tom initiates the discussion asking the client profile of the member agencies.
- MNLCT informs that 90-95% of their clients (LINC Students) are Chinese speaking. Among the LINC students 65% are women and in most of the cases they are the spouses of skilled immigrants.. Male students are recent immigrants (less than 2 years) and they are internationally trained professionals.
- TCDSB informs that most of their ESL and LINC students are from Mainland China (Mandarin speaking_ followed by Cantonese speaking Chinese, Tamils and Farsi. 46% of their clients are college graduate from country of origin.
- ACCES Employment shares that earlier 35% of their clients are from South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan/Sri Lanka), 35% from China and 15% are from Philippines. But, following the recent changes in the immigration points system, ACCES clientele has been changes to 45% of South Asians, 20% Chinese and 8% Pilipino.

Based on the inputs from the Committee members Tom summarizes the following:

Interview key informants:

Tom shared his experience in engaging selected type of employment sector as starting point and then expands to other sectors or type of employments. He asked committee members to share their views about key employers or industry to be contacted first. The following criteria were used to explore the answer:

Client category:



Major professions:

- Information Technology (IT)
- Engineering
- Health
- Business/ Admin
- Education
- Social Work

Employers:

- Industry
- Ethnic employers

Responses:

- LINC and ESL providers get more clients who are not internationally trained professionals.

- Employment agencies mostly get internationally trained professionals with good language proficiency.
- Some clients who are in the language classes irregular as they do part time job or under table jobs (mostly less paid)
- There are clients coming to Scarborough with different professional background such as engineering, IT, accounting, social work, teaching and health. There are support program in place for accounting, HR and IT professionals. The process is different for health sector where newcomers find it difficult to get through. Some other job categories such as teaching have limited opportunities within this neighbourhood.
- In North West Scarborough ethnic employers play a key role (Chinese and Tamil) on the employer side although most of them offer minimum wage positions.
- In terms of employment, focused should be given to both International Trained Professionals (ITP) and non-ITP ESL/LINC students
- Tom suggested that LIP can first identify few ethnic employers or few popular industries. Next step will be look at what job newcomers look for and then focus on selected ethnic employers or industry.

Other comments:

- Tom suggested that one way of expanding mentorship program could be identifying a specific project and seeks money from a ministry or institution that would fund the project.
- In reply to the suggestion to bring Employment Ontario to the table, Tom suggested that Toronto LIP (City LIP) would be the appropriate structure to create a higher level network and connect with Employment Ontario.
- Employers expect clients with required language skills, understanding of workplace culture and competency required for the job. This is a challenge for internationally trained professionals.
- LINC centers are not allowed to provide any professional/ skill development training programs to LINC students. However, it may be helpful to language providers to work with employment agencies and employers to provide such skill development training program at LINC centers.
- Initiatives like collaborative project between YMCA and CIBC bank that guarantee a job to the newcomer participants on their successful completion of the 6-9 months course to be encouraged for NWS LIP agencies
- Explore possibility for NWS LIP to participate in the Employment Ontario table
- YMCA will be a good source to collect data regarding the professional/education background of the newcomers who come for CBL assessment.
- Tom plans to contact with Economic development Officer of City of Toronto to get contacts of some potential employers in NWS.
- Members also proposes to contact with Scarborough business associations in Scarborough , Yee Hong and ethnic employers

- CERIS might have some research publication on 'Settlement pattern of Chinese people in NWS'

Next Steps

- Tom will help develop a questionnaire that will be used to interview some of the employers identified/contacted by Tom and the committee members.

Next meeting date, venue and time

- Next meeting scheduled on June 20th has been postponed and the revised meeting date is July 19 ,Tuesday from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm, location (TBA)

Announcements:

- TESOC organizes a job fair at Scarborough Civic Centre, 150 Borough Drive, Scarborough on Friday June 3rd, 2011 from 10:00 am– 4:30 pm. TESOC invites interested organizations to participate and set up a booth at this fair.

Meeting was adjourned by thanking everyone for their active participation.
